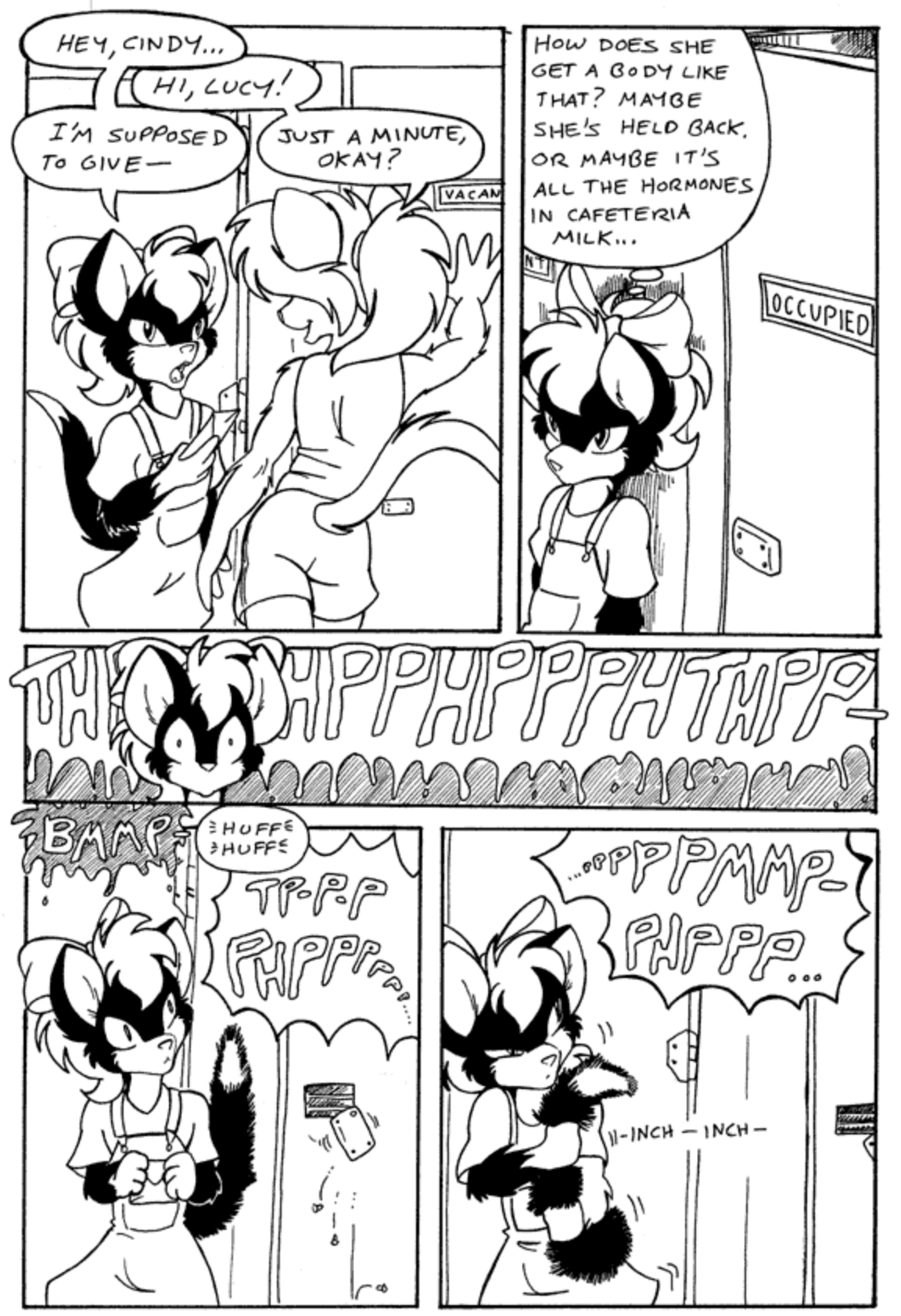
LUCY, I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
DOES IT INVOLVE KNEEING YOU IN THE BALLS?
CAN YOU SLIP THIS NOTE TO CINDY IN YOUR GYM CLASS, TOMMOROW?
OOO! DOES MY BROTHER HAVE A CRUSH?
YES.
CAN YOU AT LEAST PRETEND TO BE EMBARASSED? FOR MY SAKE!?

I WISH BOYS WOULD WRITE ME CUTE LOVE NOTES...
LOCK
CINDY'S SO POPULAR, SHE PROBABLY GETS HUNDREDS OF THESE. WHAT'S SHE GOT THAT I CAN'T COMPETE WITH?
JESUS CHRIST!!
THANKS FOR ILLUSTRATING IT SO BLATANTLY.
ANYTIME.
I'LL BET.


HEY, CINDY...
HI, LUCY!
I'M SUPPOSED TO GIVE—
JUST A MINUTE, OKAY?
VACAN
HOW DOES SHE GET A BODY LIKE THAT? MAYBE SHE'S HELD BACK. OR MAYBE IT'S ALL THE HORMONES IN CAFETERIA MILK...
OCCUPIED
THPPHPPPHTHPP—
BMMP
HUFFE HUFFE
TP-P-P PHPPPPP!...
...PPPPMMP-
PHPPP...
11-INCH — INCH —

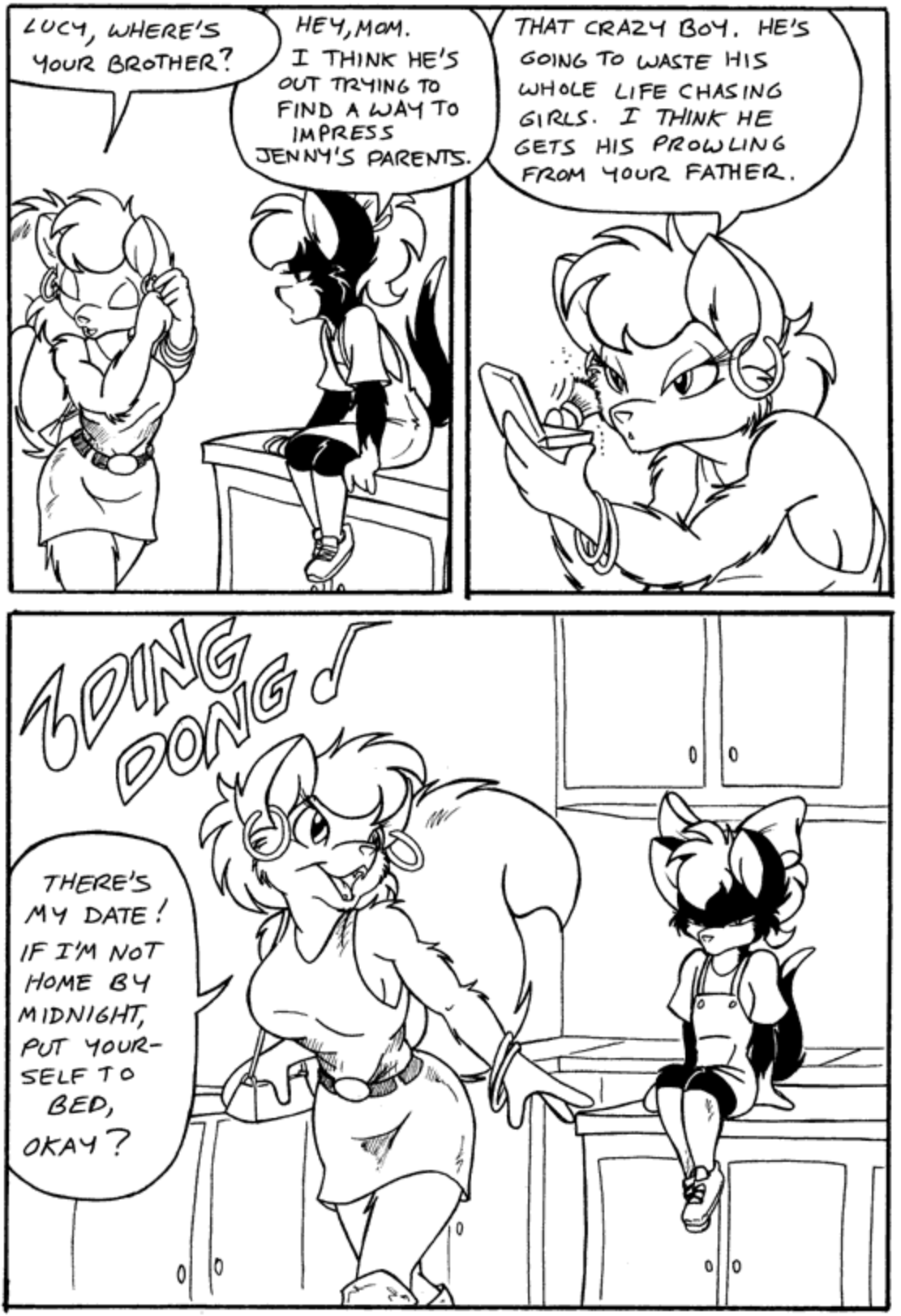
SHE WHAT?! SHE DID NOT! YOU'RE TRYING TO RUIN MY FANTASY!
SHE DID! I COULDN'T DELIVER THE NOTE!
SIGH
ALRIGHT, JUST GIVE ME THE NOTE BACK.
HEE HEE
UMMM...
THIS WOULD BE THE MOMENT WHERE YOU WOULD RETURN THE NOTE TO ME.
THE NOTE! RIGHT! IT'S... AH... YEAH... ...SOMEWHERE...
I THINK...

YOU LOST MY NOTE!!
I MUST HAVE DROPPED IT AS I RAN AWAY FROM GROUND ZERO!
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? IF SOMEONE FINDS IT THEY'LL KNOW IT'S FOR HER.
IT DOESN'T HAVE HER NAME ON IT 'CAUSE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DELIVER IT!
WELL, THE JANITOR WILL PROBABLY FIND IT ON THE FLOOR AND THROW IT AWAY.
"...WITH A YERRRRNING HEART, I CLOSE THIS LETTER. HOPEFULLY YOURS, FISK"!
AAWWWWWW!

HEY, LITTLE GUY! SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT YOUR CUTE NOTE WAS MEANT FOR ME?
YEAH...
AWW... ANY GIRL WOULD JUST ADORE HAVING A SMART, SWEET, CUTE, ROMANTIC LITTLE SWEET-HEART, LIKE YOU. AS FOR ME, YOU SEE THAT BIG 8th GRADER THERE?
UH, YEAH...
SEE, HE'S BIG, MEATY, PLAYS FOOTBALL, AND IS WAY TOO THICK AND STUPID TO BE A THREAT TO MY PERCEIVED FEMALE INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY. HE DOESN'T CHALLENGE ME, OR DO NICE THINGS THAT I HAVE TO RECIPROCATE. TO PLEASE HIM, I JUST GIGGLE STUPIDLY, SHRUG MY SHOULDERS, AND LET HIM FUCK MY BRAINS OUT.
THANKS FOR FEEDING MY DITZ EGO! CIAO!
MOM, WHAT DOES "FUCK MY BRAINS OUT" MEAN?

YOU! I TOLD YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM MY DAUGHTER! COME ALONG! OUT! OUT! OH-DUBYA-TEE, OUT!
YOU FRESH LITTLE CREEP! IF I CATCH YOU NEAR JENNY AGAIN, I'LL CALL YOUR MOTHER!
OW!
WHAP
WHAP
WHAP
HAP
AND STAY OUT OF THAT TREE NEXT TO HER WINDOW!
WHAP!
GEEZ!
SLAM!
FEMALE BRAINS MUST GET SMALLER AS THEIR HIPS GET BIGGER...

HEY! WHY ARE YOU HOGGING THE POOL? I THOUGHT YOU WERE SPENDING THE DAY WITH JENNY?
GOT KICKED OUT.
HER MOTHER THREW A CONIPTION WHEN SHE FIGURED I WAS USING THE TREE TO GET TO JENNY'S WINDOW.
YOU KNOW, FISK, YOU SHOULD WORK ON IMPRESSING HER PARENTS. I READ IN CHURCH, THAT WHEN DAVID WANTED ONE OF KING SAUL'S DAUGHTERS, SAUL ORDERED DAVID TO PRODUCE THE FORE-SKINS OF 100 SLAIN PHILLISTINES, HOPING DAVID WOULD BE KILLED. DAVID LOVED HIS WOMAN SO MUCH, HE PRESENTED SAUL WITH 200 FORESKINS! HE GOT THE GIRL.
WHAT THE HELL IS A FORESKIN?
THAT'S NOT THE POINT...
help!


LUCY, WHERE'S YOUR BROTHER?
HEY, MOM. I THINK HE'S OUT TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO IMPRESS JENNY'S PARENTS.
THAT CRAZY BOY. HE'S GOING TO WASTE HIS WHOLE LIFE CHASING GIRLS. I THINK HE GETS HIS PROWLING FROM YOUR FATHER.
DING DONG
THERE'S MY DATE! IF I'M NOT HOME BY MIDNIGHT, PUT YOURSELF TO BED, OKAY?

LUCY, WHAT'S YOUR BROTHER DOING WITH YOUR WAGON?

THAT LOOKS SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE A PILE OF FRESH FORESKINS.
OH. MY. GOD.

FISK! WHERE DID YOU GET... THOSE!?
COOL, HUH?
NO.
THEY'RE JUST SHREDDED PIG SKINS I GOT FROM THE BUTCHER SHOP. I HEARD JENNY'S DAD COMPLAINING ABOUT LAWYERS, SO I'M GOING TO TELL HIM THESE ARE THEIR FORESKINS.
THOSE STRAY DOGS SURE LOOK IMPRESSED.
AH! DAMN! QUICK! RUN HOME AND GET MY BB GUN!
BARK!
BARK
RRRRRRR
ROWF!
GRRRRR!

BRRRRING!
HMPH... LET IT RING...
I CAN'T. IT MIGHT BE MY KIDS...

HELLO? HI, LUCY!

WHAT!? DOG ATTACK!?
HOSPITAL?!!

RABIES!?

FISK'S HAD ALL HIS SHOTS AS A PRECAUTION, AND THE LAD'S GOING TO BE FINE.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR. THIS YOUNG MAN'S IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.
WHAT'D I DO!?
LUCY TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR LITTLE HAIRBRAINED STUNT WITH A WAGON FULL OF PORK. YOU RUINED A VERY NICE EVENING FOR YOUR MOTHER, AND DON'T YOU LAY YOUR EARS AT ME WHEN I'M TALKING!
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, THOSE WERE THE FORESKINS OF SLAIN LAWYERS. I WAS ON MY WAY TO IMPRESS JENNY'S DAD WITH THEM WHEN I WAS AMBUSHED.
I CAN WRITE YOU A REFERAL TO A GOOD CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST...
GOD, YOU PEOPLE...

FISK, HONEY, I'M GOING TO SPEND THE DAY WITH FRIENDS. THERE'S SEVERAL PHONE NUMBERS ON THE FRIDGE IF YOU NEED ME.
OKAY, MOM.
WHERE'S LUCY?
STILL ASLEEP.
MUNCH
SAVE HER SOME CEREAL, OKAY?
SHAKE SHAKE

HEY, LUCY! I ATE ALL THE CEREAL, BUT I GOT YOU A PEAR AND HALF A POP-TART AND...
WHOA. YOU LOOK ROUGH.
I FEEL SICK.
SICK!? YOU CAN'T BE SICK! MOM'S GOING TO BE GONE ALL DAY!
LUCKY FOR YOU, I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR WHEN I GROW UP!
YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME.
KER-SNAP!!

I BET I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT DISEASE YOU HAVE, OTHER THAN JUST GIRL GERMS.
MWEH.
I THINK YOU MAY HAVE SYPHILIS.
WHAT'S THAT?
WHOA... MAYBE NOT.
GIMME THAT!

GOT SOME ORANGE JUICE?
YEAH, MOM. I GOT IT.
GO TO MY MEDICINE CABINET AND YOU SHOULD FIND SOME STORE BRAND DECONGESTANT.
WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?
THEY'RE RED CAPSULES.
I'VE GOT SOME INSIDE A LITTLE ROUND CALENDAR.
NO, HONEY. PUT THOSE BACK.
OKAY, GOT SOME.
GIVE HER ONE AND LET HER SLEEP. THEY'LL MAKE HER DROWSY.
OKAY.
FUCK.

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OKAY, GOT SOME.
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OKAY.
FUCK.

SHE'S OUT COLD! HER HEART BEAT IS VERY FAINT! GET SOMEONE HERE, FAST!
OH, GOD... I THINK MY SON MISTOOK MY BLOOD PRESSURE MEDS FOR COLD MEDICINE. I FOUND THE BOX...
OF COURSE I... I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG! JUST HURRY! BEFORE SHE DIES!!
GOD-DAMMIT!
I CAN'T STAY CALM! SHE'S FUCKING DYING!
WHAT?
OKAY... N-NO, HER EARS ARE STILL PINK. IT FEELS LIKE SHE'S BREATHING BUT IT'S SHALLOW...
JESUS CHRIST.

SHE'S STABLE, FOR NOW. IF SHE KEEPS DOING WELL, I THINK SHE'LL BE OKAY, BUT WE JUST DON'T KNOW.
WE'RE ON OUR WAY.
O-OKAY.
I'M S-SORRY... :CHOKE:
SH-SH-SHH. MAMA SHOULD HAVE BEEN HOME, BABY.
LET'S GO TO THE HOSPITAL.

I'M HERE TO CHECK ON LUCY BLACK.
HOW YOU SPELL IT?
HOW DO YOU SPELL "BLACK"?
YES, M'RM, THAT'S WHAT AH AXED.
BEE... ELL... AA... SEE... KAY...
MMMM YIS. THE LITTLE GIRL. SHE'S IN INTENSIVE CARE, BEAN' WATCHED. WE CAIN'T LET JUS' ANYBODY SEE HER.
JUST ANYBODY? I'M HER MOTHER. WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE?
=SIGH= DON'T ANSWER THAT.
MMMMM-HM.

WE CAN GO SEE LUCY, NOW, FISK.
I DON'T KNOW.
=SNIFF= I MESSED UP SO BAD. I'VE NEVER FELT THIS HORRIBLE IN MY LIFE AND I DON'T WANT TO FEEL WORSE. I SHOULD BE THE ONE DYING...
...I'M THE ONE WHO SCREWED UP, NOT LUCY.
LOOK, FISK. LOOK AT ME...
GRAB
I WAS CARRYING YOU AND LUCY WHEN YOUR FATHER DIED. IT WAS A HARD DECISION TO BRING YOU INTO THIS WORLD AFTER THAT, AGAINST A LOT OF ADVICE AND PRESSURE. I FOUGHT HARD TO RAISE YOU AND I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE A KITTEN TONIGHT. NOT LUCY, NOT YOU...
THIS IS NOT YOUR FAULT. SHE'S MY LITTLE GIRL AND MY RESPONSIBILITY. SHE'S NOT DEAD, SHE'S IN THE HOSPITAL AND YOU'VE GOT TO BE STRONG, KITTEN...
YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN IN THIS FAMILY AND LUCY NEEDS YOUR STRENGTH. I DON'T CARE WHAT THOSE FEMINIST BITCHES TEACH YOU AT SCHOOL, STRENGTH MEANS A HELL OF A LOT...

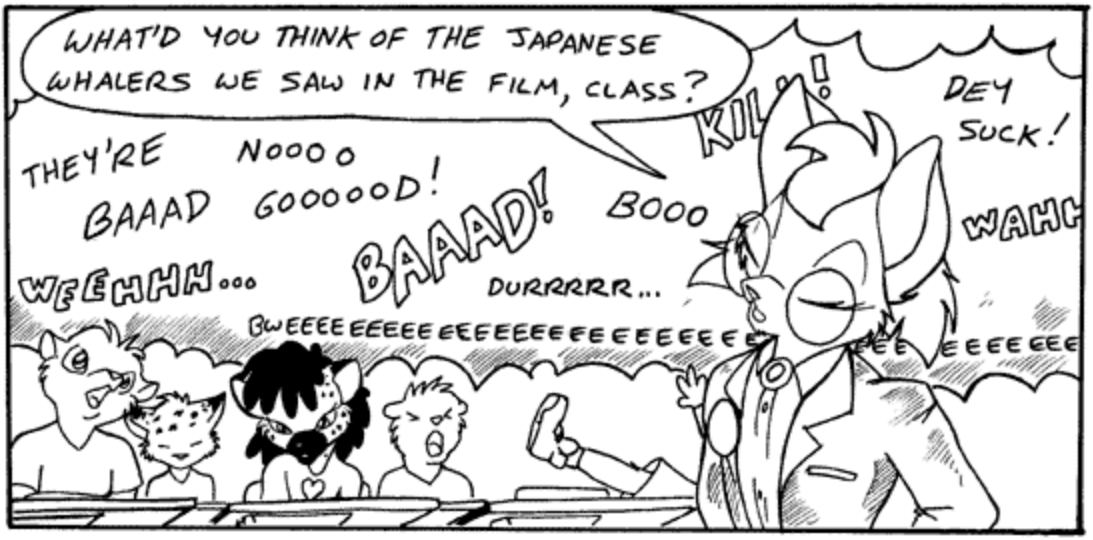
Zzzz...
SHOULD I TELL HIM VISITING HOURS ARE OVER WITH?
I THINK HE'LL BE OKAY FOR THE NIGHT.

I'M NOT THE BEST KID. I RARELY COME FORWARD AND TALK TO YOU, AND I CAN UNDERSTAND IF YOU THINK IT'S ONLY IF I WANT SOME-THING.
I DON'T WANT TO BE VAIN, OR COME TO YOU BECAUSE I FEEL GUILTY. UP UNTIL NOW, I'VE JUST BEEN A FOOLISH LITTLE KID. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROVE MY SINCERITY, OTHER TO ASK FOR A MOMENT OF TRUST, AND I'LL TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT NO MATTER HOW IT TURNS...
IT'D BE TOO EASY TO BEG FOR MYSELF, BECAUSE I FEEL GUILTY, AND I WANT ALL THIS PAIN TO GO AWAY. I DON'T CARE WHAT I GO THROUGH ANYMORE, AND I WON'T BOTHER YOU WITH THE SELFISH WISHES OF ANOTHER FOOLISH SINNER. THERE ARE PEOPLE WITH REAL PROBLEMS, LIKE LUCY. LUCY DOESN'T DESERVE TO DIE. SHE NEVER MESSED UP. I'M NOT THE BEST BROTHER, BUT I NEVER REALIZED HOW MUCH I WOULD MISS HER. NOT BECAUSE OF GUILT, OR FEAR OF BEING PUNISHED... BUT...
... I REALIZE I LOVE MY SISTER SO MUCH.
FISK, WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
S-SHUT UP, I'M TRYING TO PRAY.

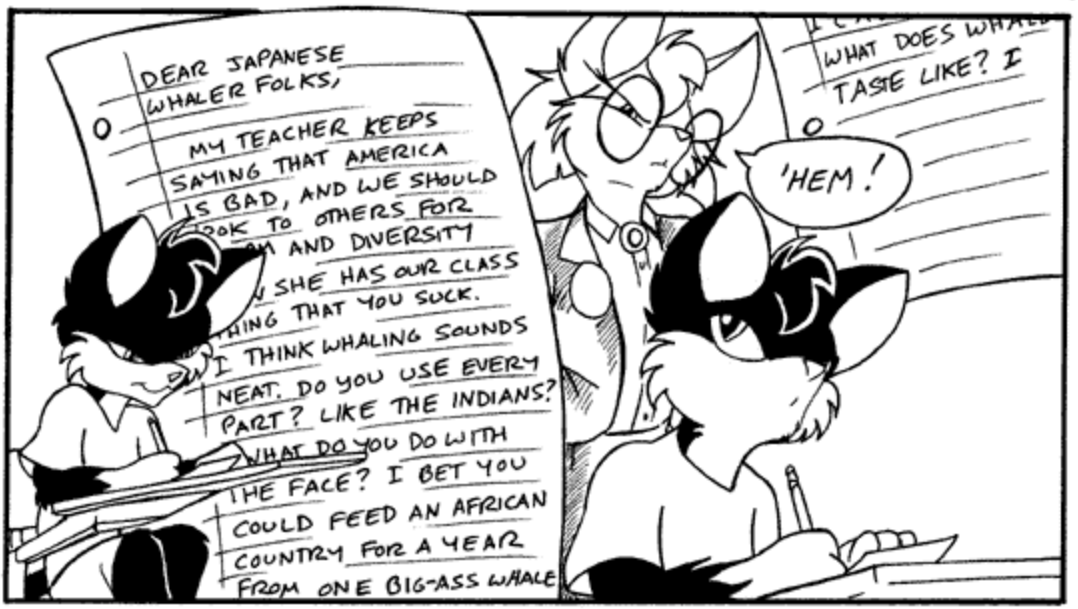
WHOA! HOW SICK WAS I?
LUCY!
C'MEER...
EEK!
WAS IT THAT BAD?
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT, NOW.

FISK, MOM TOLD ME WHAT HAPPENED.
AH..
DON'T FEEL BAD. I THINK YOU'RE A GOOD BROTHER FOR BEING THERE.
SCRITCHIE
SCRITCHIE
MMM.
WERE YOU REALLY ALL WORRIED AND CRYING AND STUFF?
AHEM... NOT SO LOUD.

GOOD MORNING, CLASS. BEAR WITH ME, THIS MORNING. I'M RATHER TIRED. I WAS UP ALL NIGHT WATCHING THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION.
I THINK OUR GEORGIA BOY IS GOING TO DO IT, AGAIN! IF HE LOSES, I COULD JUST DIE!
CARTER MONDALE '80
YEESH. DON'T DO US ANY FAVORS...
DEAD
SILENCE
STARTING THE MORNING OFF EARLY, FISK?
PRINCIPAL LONGFELLOW -.-
=SIGH=


WHAT'D YOU THINK OF THE JAPANESE WHALERS WE SAW IN THE FILM, CLASS?
THEY'RE BAAAD
Nooo o GOOOOOD!
BAAAD!
Booo
WEEHHH...
DURRRRR...
BWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
KIL!
DEY SUCK!
WAHH
EEEEEEE

WE'RE GOING TO WRITE THE LARGEST JAPANESE WHALING COMPANY, AS A CLASS, AND TELL THEM WHAT WE THINK. THIS WILL BE A FINE CLASS ACTIVITY, SO PLEASE TAKE IT SERIOUSLY...


DEAR JAPANESE WHALER FOLKS,
MY TEACHER KEEPS SAYING THAT AMERICA IS BAD, AND WE SHOULD LOOK TO OTHERS FOR M AND DIVERSITY
SHE HAS OUR CLASS THING THAT YOU SUCK.
I THINK WHALING SOUNDS NEAT. DO YOU USE EVERY PART? LIKE THE INDIANS?
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE FACE? I BET YOU COULD FEED AN AFRICAN COUNTRY FOR A YEAR FROM ONE BIG-ASS WHALE
WHAT DOES WHALE TASTE LIKE? I
'HEM!

BRING!
HELLO?
HELLO. IS THIS SHEILA BLACK?
THIS IS SHE.
THIS IS EUNICE BEDBUTTER, FISK'S TEACHER.
OH, HI.
I'D LIKE TO ARRANGE A MEETING TO DISCUSS FISK'S CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR.
OH, DEAR. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
DING!
HE'S NOT TAKING HIS ASSIGNMENTS SERIOUSLY, AND I HAVE PAPER AFTER PAPER OF HIS, WHERE HE MAKES SARCASTIC REMARKS ON HIS ASSIGNMENTS.
I WASN'T AWARE...
ARE YOU SUPRISED BY THIS?
WELL... NO, BUT...
THEN PERHAPS I'LL SEE YOU THIS AFTERNOON?

TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK...
TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK
SNAP
HELLO, ARE YOU MRS. BEDBUTTER?
OH! IN THE NAME OF SUSAN B. ANTHONY...
WHO?
OH! BY THE GHODZ...

EH-HEM. NOW THEN. I'VE SAVED FISK'S WORK SO THAT YOU MAY GO OVER IT, AFTER WHICH, WE MAY WORK OUT A PLAN, FOR SCHOOL AND HOME, THAT WILL HELP HIM FORM A MORE SERIOUS ATTITUDE ABOUT HIS WORK. I THINK YOU'LL FIND HIS WRITINGS RATHER COMBATIVE TOWARD THE SUBJECTS AT HAND.
STACK! STACK!
HMMM...
AFRICAN SLAVES IN AMERICA
SLAVERY IS BAD, WHICH
THE NATIVE AMERICAN STRUGGLE
BEFORE CATS FROM EUROPE CAME TO THE AMERICAS, THE NATIVE TRIBES WERE A PAGAN, STONE-AGED PEOPLES STEEPED IN OUTDATED WAYS, INCLUDING SLASH-AND-BURN FARMING AND CHILD-SACRIFICE. THEY WERE SWALLOWED AND DISPLACED WHEN THE CATS
PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER
JUST BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT IS FROM OUR STATE, PEOPLE THINK HE IS GOOD. I KNOW A KID NAMED BILLY WHO IS FROM GEORGIA, AND HE IS
AMERICA'S CRIMES
I DON'T THINK WE ARE A BAD COUNTRY. MY DAD DIED DEFENDING PEOPLE FROM INVADERS WHO WANTED TO TAKE THEIR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY. SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT IS BAD, BUT I HAVE A REASON TO REALLY LOVE MY DAD, EVEN THOUGH I NEVER KNEW HIM, PERSONALLY. ONLY A GREAT COUNTRY WOULD PROTECT ITS
I'M SORRY. DID YOU SAY THERE WAS A PROBLEM?

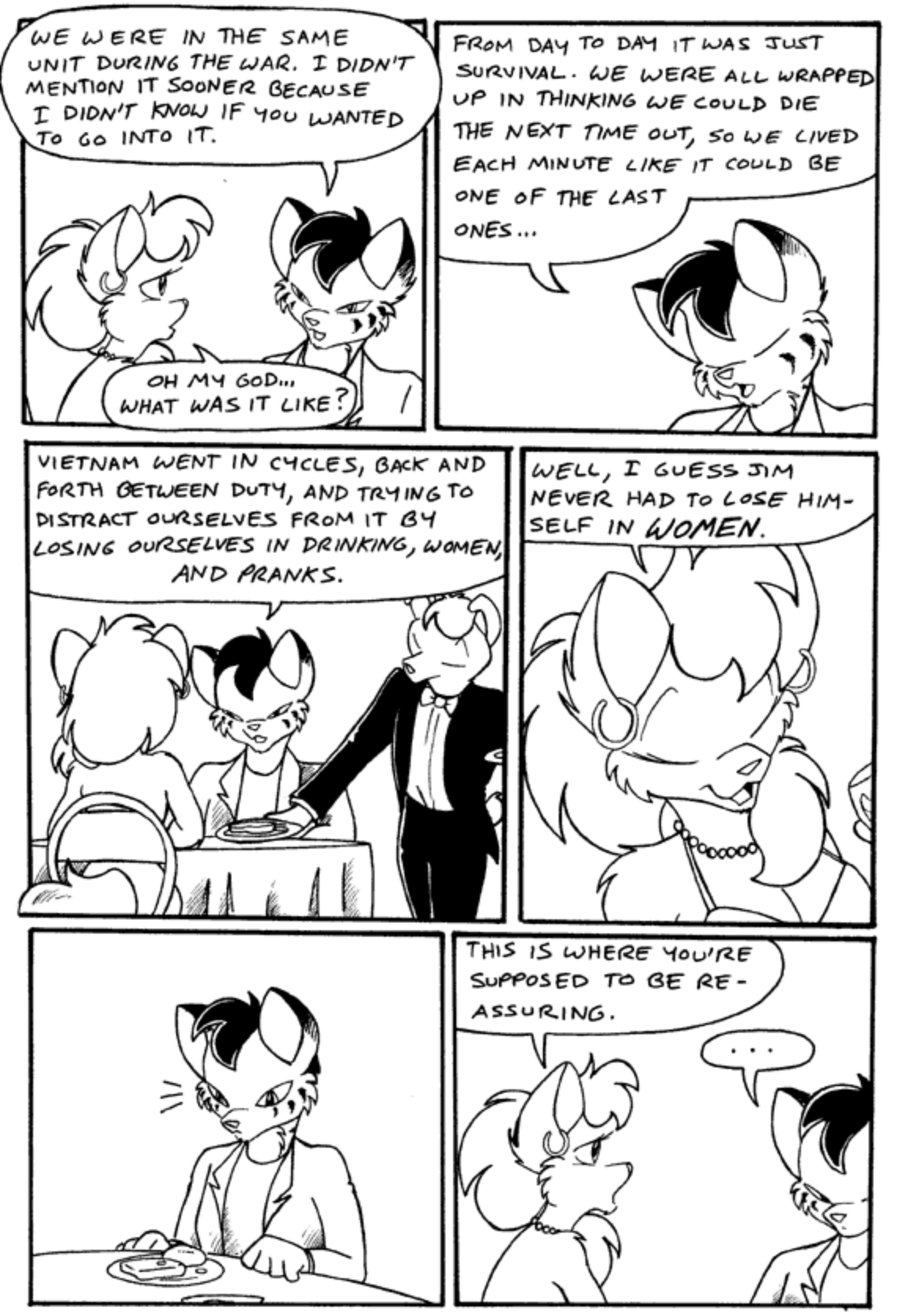
HONESTLY, MRS. BEDBUTTER, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING HERE BUT OPINIONS STEMMING FROM SOME KIND OF SICK POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION.
I DON'T SEE HOW HIS VIEWS CONFLICT WITH HIS ACADEMIC STUDIES. I FIND THIS WHOLE ORDEAL A BIG WASTE OF MY TIME, AND I THINK I'LL BE GOING.
MS. BLACK! WE HAVE A SOCIAL CONTRACT AS TEACHERS AND WOMEN TO HELP OUR CHILDREN DEVELOPE A SOCIAL AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE BEFITTING A MORE ENLIGHTENED CULTURE. IT'S NOT 1950, ANYMORE.
ESPECIALLY THESE YOUNG MEN. THEIR OUTLOOK MUST BE TEMPERED SO GIRLS WON'T HAVE TO DRESS LIKE THEIR MOTHERS AND ADVANCE THROUGH LIFE BY THEIR BACKSIDES.
BLINK

I BEG YOUR PARDON! I DON'T GIVE A FUCK ABOUT YOUR SOCIAL ENGINEERING PROJECTS, BUT DON'T DARE INSULT HOW I LOOK OR LIVE!
MS. BLACK—
SHUT UP!
YOU'LL TEACH FISK MATH, SCIENCE, AND REAL HISTORY! IF HE CHEWS GUM OR TALKS IN CLASS, TELL ME AND I'LL BEAT HIS LITTLE ASS, MYSELF! BUT DON'T WASTE MY TIME WITH CRAP LIKE THIS!
I HAVE TO GO HOME AND FINISH BAKING FOR MY KIDS. AFTER I SEND THEM TO BED, I MAY JUST INVITE A MAN OVER, FEED HIM, TOO, AND GIVE HIM SUCH A HARD ORGASM, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO WALK 'TIL MORNING.
BECAUSE I'M A WOMAN! AND IT'S MY FUCKING RIGHT!

TAK TAK TAK TA
AH! MS. BLACK!
WHAT.
I OVERHEARD YOUR MEETING WITH BEDBUTTER, AND AS THE PRINCIPLE, I WANT TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE SCHOOL. I HATE SEEING PARENTS ANGRY.
MMM...
I HAVE TO ASK. WAS THE ORGASM REMARK NECESSARY?
WHY? INTERESTED?
WOULD THAT BE APPROPRIATE?
NO? YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT MARRIED.
AH. YOU'RE SHARP. DIVORCED.
THANKS FOR THE APOLOGY, BUT I MUST BE GETTING HOME. OTHERWISE, I'D LOVE TO CHAT FURTHER, MISTER...
LONGFELLOW.
RIGHT...

LOCK
MOM, DON'T LISTEN TO MRS. BEDBUTTER. SHE HATES ME BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE JIMMY CARTER, AND SHE'S ALWAYS STACKING THE DECK AGAINST ME...
I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT HER ANYMORE, SWEETIE. DINNER WILL BE READY IN FIFTEEN MINUTES.
OH.
PRINCIPLE LONGFELLOW CALLED.
OH?
SIX TIMES.
BEDTIME'S AT EIGHT TONIGHT, KIDS!
BLINK!
BLINK!
WHAT THE HELL?!
THESE EVENTS ARE RELATED, SOMEHOW.

DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY, HARVE. I DIDN'T EXPECT THESE KINDS OF NIGHTS FROM MY KIDS' SCHOOL PRINCIPAL. IT'S BEEN A VERY EXTRAVEGANT WEEK.
WELL, I'M SINGLE AND HAVE ALL MY ASSETS INTACT. DESPITE THE DIVORCE, I'M NOT EXACTLY SCRAPING.
I'M JUST A COUNTRY GIRL. YOU'LL RUN THE RISK OF SPOILING ME.
ON THE CONTRARY. I FEEL LIKE I'M THE ONE BEING SPOILED.
YOU'RE LAYING IT ON THICK. I HAVEN'T BLUSHED IN YEARS.
YOUR HUSBAND WAS RIGHT. IT'S WHEN YOU'RE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL.
YOU KNEW JIM?
MMM?


WE WERE IN THE SAME UNIT DURING THE WAR. I DIDN'T MENTION IT SOONER BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU WANTED TO GO INTO IT.
OH MY GOD... WHAT WAS IT LIKE?
FROM DAY TO DAY IT WAS JUST SURVIVAL. WE WERE ALL WRAPPED UP IN THINKING WE COULD DIE THE NEXT TIME OUT, SO WE LIVED EACH MINUTE LIKE IT COULD BE ONE OF THE LAST ONES...
VIETNAM WENT IN CYCLES, BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN DUTY, AND TRYING TO DISTRACT OURSELVES FROM IT BY LOSING OURSELVES IN DRINKING, WOMEN, AND PRANKS.
WELL, I GUESS JIM NEVER HAD TO LOSE HIMSELF IN WOMEN.
THIS IS WHERE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE REASSURING.
...

HARVE! YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS! JIM WAS LIKE THAT?
SHEILA...
I DIDN'T WANT IT TO GO IN THIS DIRECTION, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'D BE HEALTHY TO LIE TO YOU.
IT WAS ALMOST NINE YEARS AGO. I CAN'T SAY JIM WOULDN'T HAVE MADE A GREAT FATHER IF HE'D MADE IT HOME...
I THINK I NEED TO GO HOME, FOR NOW. I'VE GOT A LOT OF THINKING TO DO...
THANK YOU.

THIRD ARMY FORCES COMMAND, GENERAL BECK'S OFFICE.
UM... I WAS LOOKING FOR GENERAL KELSO.
HE NO LONGER WORKS AT THIS OFFICE. WOULD YOU LIKE HIS NEW NUMBER?
ARMY WIFE
OKAY. ALL RIGHT... THANK YOU.
SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE NOTESCRIBBLES
ARMY WIFE
RING RING RING
ARMY WIFE
CLICK CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, OPERATIONS DIVISION.
UH... I'M TRYING TO TALK TO GEN- I MEAN, ROBERT KELSO. HIS OLD OFFICE GAVE ME THIS NUMBER...
MAY I ASK WHO'S CALLING?
SHEILA BLACK. I'M AN OLD FRIEND.
ONE MOMENT.
ARMY WIFE
CLICK SHEILA?
GENERAL!
HEH. NOT ANYMORE...
ARMY

I KIND OF HAVE A SILLY QUESTION. IT'S THE REASON I CALLED...
DON'T BE SILLY. ASK.
WAS JIM... FAITHFUL, DURING HIS TIME OVERSEAS?
ARMY WIFE
OF COURSE HE WAS. I CAN VOUCH FOR THAT, PERSONALLY.
ROB, PLEASE DON'T HOLD BACK. I HAVE TO KNOW WHO I CAN TRUST.
YOU'RE LIKE FAMILY, SHEILA. I'D NEVER LIE TO YOU. WHO TOLD YOU THIS?
SOMEONE WHO WAS IN JIM'S UNIT, THAT I'VE BEEN SEEING. HARVEY LONGFELLOW. I THINK HE WAS A SERGEANT.
...
I NEVER HAD A "LONGFELLOW" UNDER MY COMMAND...
TABBY COLORS? BLACK HAIR? ARE YOU SURE?
I WAS ONLY A MAJOR, THEN. WE HAD VERY SMALL UNITS IN OUR TYPES OF... ... OPERATIONS. I CAN ASSURE YOU I REMEMBER EVERY MAN IN MY UNIT.
ARMY WIFE
JESUS...
LOOK, I'VE GOT A MEETING AT THE CDC THIS WEEK-END, SO I'LL BE FLYING DOWN. IF YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE LUNCH, WE CAN DISCUSS THIS IN MORE DETAIL.

ROB! IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU! HOW WAS YOUR FLIGHT?
UNEVENTFUL.
HOW ARE THE KIDS?
HARDER TO KEEP UP WITH EVERY DAY.
I'M REALLY GLAD YOU DECIDED TO HAVE THEM. YOU'VE EARNED A LOT OF OUR RESPECT...
THE MORE I THOUGHT, THE LESS OF A REAL CHOICE THERE WAS.
MOST THINGS IN LIFE ARE LIKE THAT...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN SEEING LONGFELLOW?
JUST A BIT OVER A WEEK.
WHY DO YOU ASK?
WE CAN DISCUSS IT OVER LUNCH.

I PULLED LONGFELLOW'S FILE FOR YOU...
YOU HAVE IT?
IF THIS IS THE SAME PERSON, BASED ON YOUR DESCRIPTION, HE NEVER GOT CLOSE TO VIETNAM. HE SPENT A SHORT MILITARY LIFE AT A SUPPLY DEPOT IN OKINAWA.
HE WAS IN FOR TWO YEARS BEFORE BEING DISCHARGED ON RAW TERMS WITH THE ARMY. REPORTS FROM HIS C.O. COMPLAINED ABOUT FRATERNIZING AGRESSIVELY. HE WAS ALMOST SENT TO THE BASE PSYCHOLOGIST.
DAMMIT...
FWAP!
THAT SON OF A BITCH... WHAT DOES HE GAIN BY LYING TO ME ABOUT JIM!?
I CAN ONLY SPECULATE, IF HE DESTROYS THE MEMORIES OF YOUR HUSBAND, HE HAS AN EASIER TIME FILLING IN.
ONE FORM OF PREDATION IS TO WOUND AND WAIT...

CLICK
OH! UH... MS. BLACK! CAN I HELP YOU WITH ANYTHING?
NOPE.
ER... YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE! HE'S MEETING WITH THE SUPER-INTENDENT!
WATCH ME.
WHAM
IF YOU'RE NOT THE SUPERINTENDENT, THEN GET THE FUCK OUT!!

JESUS, SHEILA, THIS IS NOT HOW IT LOOKS–
I DON'T CARE. WE'RE THROUGH.
WHAT?
OKINAWA!? A GODDAMMED SUPPLY DEPOT!!? YOU LIED TO ME!
...
WHAT? WHO SAID THAT?
DON'T EVEN! DON'T FUCKING LIE AGAIN!
I KNOW MY DAMNED SOURCES! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WERE THINKING, BUT DON'T YOU DARE TALK THAT KIND OF SHIT ABOUT JIM, AGAIN! DON'T CALL ME! DON'T COME NEAR ME! AND STAY AWAY FROM MY KITTENS!

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
THE HELL...
SHEILA, I REALLY NEED TO TALK TO YOU. PLEASE LET ME IN...
TSK OH, LORD...
NMM...
RUB RUB
NEVER, WHAT WHENEVER!!
CANNOT A TIME NOT TRUE! YOU TO KNOW THE BEST—
BULLSHIT!
YOU CAN'T CLING TO YOUR PAST IF YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO HAVE A FUTU—
WITH WHAT? YOU!? WHILE YOU'RE NOT GETTING BLOWN AT WORK!!?
I TOLD YOU IF YOU'D LET ME EXPL—
I'M NOT A GOD-DAMMED IDIOT, HARVE!
?
SHEILA... LOOK AT ME...
NO HARVE, NOT THIS TIME. YOU HAVE TO LEAVE...
FISK? WHAT'S GOING ON?
MOM'S HAVING A FIGHT WITH PRINCIPAL LONGFELLOW.

SHEILA, DON'T DO THIS TO ME. YOU'RE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN I'VE EVER MET...
ERK
BLINK
LET GO!
SHEILA!
I SAID -
SLAP
GOD-DAMMIT! DON'T MAKE ME GET ROUGH!
SLAP
AIEE-!
MAYBE THAT'S HOW YOU WA-
FISK! WE NEED TO CALL THE POLICE!
NO!
NO!
POLICE!? MY ASS!
FISK!

IF YOU START TO SCREAM YOU CAN SAY GOODBYE TO THIS GORGEOUS FACE...
OHH... GOD NO...
NNG... YOU'RE AS DELIGHTFUL ;HUFF; TAKEN AS MOST ARE, WILLING...
SMACK!
WHUU-?
CRACK

BROKEN JAW AND NOSE, MILD CONCUSSION. HE'LL LIVE
THANKS, BILL.
THE MOTHER'S GOING TO THE HOSPITAL IN MY CAR. YOU GOT ROOM IN YOURS FOR THE KIDS?
SURE THING.
HEY, FISK. YOU DID A GOOD JOB, BUDDY. WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU KITTENS TO THE HOSPITAL.
OKAY.
I WANT YOU TO GIVE THIS TO YOUR MOTHER. IT'S THE CARD OF SOMEONE YOU SHOULD SEE.
COME ON. WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU TO THE HOSPITAL.

YOU'RE HEALING WELL, MR. LONGFELLOW. YOU'LL BE READY FOR SURGERY IN A FEW DAYS.
MM.
GET SOME REST. THE NURSE WILL BE IN IN AN HOUR WITH YOUR FEED TUBE.
CLICK
HOW'S OUR PATIENT, DOCTOR?
HE'S ALL YOURS. I'LL START THE PAPERWORK.
RISE AND SHINE, MR. LONGFELLOW...
MM?
YOUR SURGERY HAS BEEN PUSHED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE...

MS. BLACK, THE D.A. OF COBB COUNTY INTENDS TO GET A CONVICTION, AND ENSURE THAT MISTAH LONGFELLOW SERVES LONG, HARD TIME. I THINK OUR MEDICAL EVIDENCE WILL BE ENOUGH. I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT YOU OR FISK NEEDIN' TO TEST-
R-RING!
EXCUSE ME...
BAUMGARDNER'S OFFICE. MM-HM... YES...
WHAT?
YOU'RE KIDDING... ALL RIGHT, THANK YOU.
WELL, WE'RE GOING TO BE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO NOT NEED A TRIAL...
HOW?
LONGFELLOW DIED. MENINGITIS CONTRACTED DURING RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY...

FISK, YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE WHAT YOU SAW, AND WHAT YOU DID, CAN PLACE A VERY LARGE EMOTIONAL WEIGHT ON A GROWING CHILD'S MIND. WE CAN'T HELP YOU WORK PAST IT IF YOU STAY CLOSED UP...
YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW HOW I FEEL?
I DIDN'T FREEZE, OR PAUSE, I JUST LET MY BRAIN AND BODY DO WHAT I WANTED. WHEN THE BAT CONNECTED WITH HIS HEAD, IT FELT GOOD. I TOOK CONTROL OF A WILD SITUATION, AND IT WAS RIGHT.
ADULTS ARE ALWAYS TELLING ME THAT VIOLENCE SOLVES NOTHING...
WELL, LIFE'S NOT SO SIMPLE. MY MOTHER TELLS ME IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE A MAN. SOMETIMES THAT MEANS STANDING UP AND DEFENDING WHAT'S RIGHT, AND THAT CAN BE VIOLENT. SO, I REALIZE, BEING A MAN ISN'T ABOUT JUST HAVING STRENGTH, IT'S ABOUT JUDGEMENT, AND HOW TO ACT TOWARD EACH SITUATION...
PRINCIPAL LONGFELLOW IS DEAD. I KNOW INSIDE I'M SUPPOSED TO FEEL BAD, BUT I DON'T. I FEEL NOTHING. I JUST HOPE MY FEELINGS DON'T MEAN I'M GOING TO BE IN TROUBLE.
MMM...

MOM? MOM? MOM! MOM? MOMooo
MOM!? MOMMMMMM... MOM? MOTHER?
MOM? MOM-MOM-MOM! HELLO
MOMMMooo MOM! MOM! MOM!?
I WONDER IF SHE CAN DO THAT UNTIL HER VOICE GIVES...
YES... DEAR?
MOM?
WHAT?
CAN ELIZABETH AND LYDIA SPEND THE NIGHT?
WELL, I SUPPOSE IF IT'S OKAY WITH THEIR PARENTS...
MAN, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR TAIL?
A TREMOR IN THE FORCE...

<OKAY! LETS TALK ABOUT SOME MINDLESS GIRL CRAP!>
<I WAS JUST GOING TO SUGGEST THAT!>
<I'LL GIGGLE AND SAY "NO WAY!" A LOT!>
=KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK=
?
WHAT WAS THAT?
THE FRONT DOOR...
THIS LATE?
WHERE'S YOUR MOM?
ASLEEP.
I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD GET IT.
READY?
READY.

UM, HI.
HI.
CAN YOU GIVE THIS TO FISK, FOR ME?
OH, OKAY...
THAT WAS A HYENA...
MM-HM.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT.

OHHH FIIISSSK!
YE, AS I WALK THROUGH THE SHADOW OF THE VALLEY OF DEATH...
SOME GIRL GAVE YOU THIS NOTE.
OH, THANK YOU.
WHAT?
OPEN IT!

DING DONG
OH, HELLO.
HI. CAN FISK COME OUTSIDE?
FISK, SOMEONE'S HERE TO SEE YOU.
HM?
YAY! BOYFRIEND! C'MON!!
YANK
HOLY-
HMMMM.
AH, IF ONLY IT WAS STILL THAT EASY.
HM. I SHOULD TRY THAT...

MOM, I NEED SOME OF YOUR EXPERTISE FOR A SECOND.
HOW FLATTERING.
I NEED TO ATTRACT BOYS. THEY SEEM TO IGNORE ME, AND I NEED TO KNOW HOW TO CHANGE THAT.
IT'S PRETTY SIMPLE, HONEY. GIRLS GROW UP A LITTLE FASTER AT YOUR AGE, AND MOST BOYS ARE STILL ACTING LIKE LITTLE BOYS. YOU JUST NEED TO BE A LITTLE PATIENT, AND THEY'LL CATCH UP.
I WAS THINKING OF A NEW WARDROBE AND HAIRSTYLE.
YOU SHOULD WORK TO DEVELOPE CHARM, CARING, AND PERSONALITY.
THOSE ARE SUCH NEBULOUS, INTANGIBLE QUALITIES, MOM.
YOU'LL DEVELOPE MORE "TANGIBLE" QUALITIES IN A FEW YEARS.

THIS IS YOUR TREEHOUSE?
YEAH. IT WAS HERE WHEN MY MOM BOUGHT THE HOUSE.
I'VE NEVER MET A BOY WITH HIS OWN HOUSE, BEFORE.
WELL, I'VE NEVER MET A GIRL NAMED SHANIKWA, BEFORE.
DO YOU MIND IF I JUST CALL YOU "NIKKI"?
OKAY.
NEAT. YOU GOT LIGHTS AND STUFF...
WELL, WE FIXED IT UP NICE.
THIS IS A GOOD PLACE TO HAVE SEX.
THEN I- WHAT!?
TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES.
HEY!

I THINK I WAS TOO YOUNG FOR THAT.
TSK.
I THINK THIS MOST PIVOTAL MOMENT OF MY LIFE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN IN A PINK BEDROOM ON A GIGANTIC CANOPY BED WITH FRILLY PILLOWS...
GIGGLE YOU'RE SILLY.
SOMEONE'S CALLING YOUR NAME. IS THAT YOUR DAD?
HMMP-!
SHH! HE MIGHT HEAR!
WON'T YOU GET IN TROUBLE?
NOT IF I STAY HERE FOR NOW.
AND IF YOU TELL HIM I'M HERE I'LL HAVE TO SOCK YOU IN THE MOUTH!
UM...

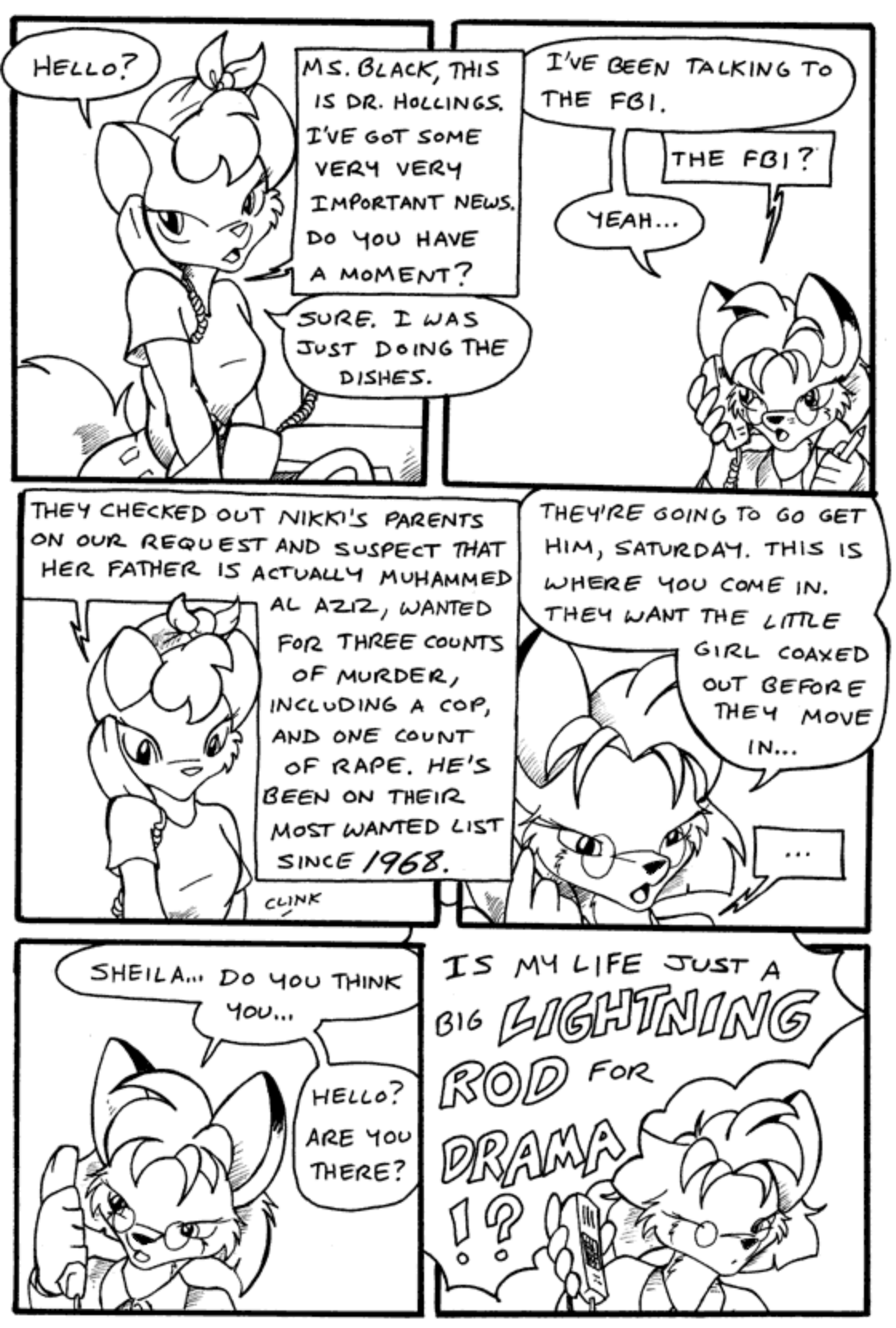
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? YOU NEVER MISS DINNER.
I WAS IN THE TREEHOUSE.
KISSING AGAIN?
WELL, LOTS MORE THAN KISSING, ACTUALLY.
>GASP< FISK! YOU'RE ONLY TEN!
CALM DOWN. SHE'S ELEVEN. IT'S OKAY.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT OKAY!
OH. HM. SEEMED A BIT COOLER THAT WAY, THOUGH...
WHAT IS THAT SMELL? YOU SMELL LIKE COCO-BUTTER AND CAESAR SALAD.
OH. THAT'S SHANIKWA.
YOU BETTER GET A SHOWER BEFORE MOM HAS A FIT!
SNIFF
SNIFF
BLINK

KNOK KNOK
OH, HELLO.
HI.
CAN FISK PLEASE COME OUTSIDE?
HM, I THOUGHT HE WAS ALREADY OUTSIDE. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE MORNING.
IS SHE GONE?

FISK! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE TRASH!?
I GOTTA HIDE FROM NIKKI, SOMETIMES.
BRUSH BRUSH
WHY IS THAT?
SHE'S ALL OVER ME, AND QUITE DEMANDING. I NEED SOME TIME TO MYSELF.
AH. WHAT IS SHE DEMANDING OF?
LITTLE KITTENS WHO LIE TO THEIR MOTHERS DON'T GO TO HEAVEN.
I HAVEN'T LIED, YET.

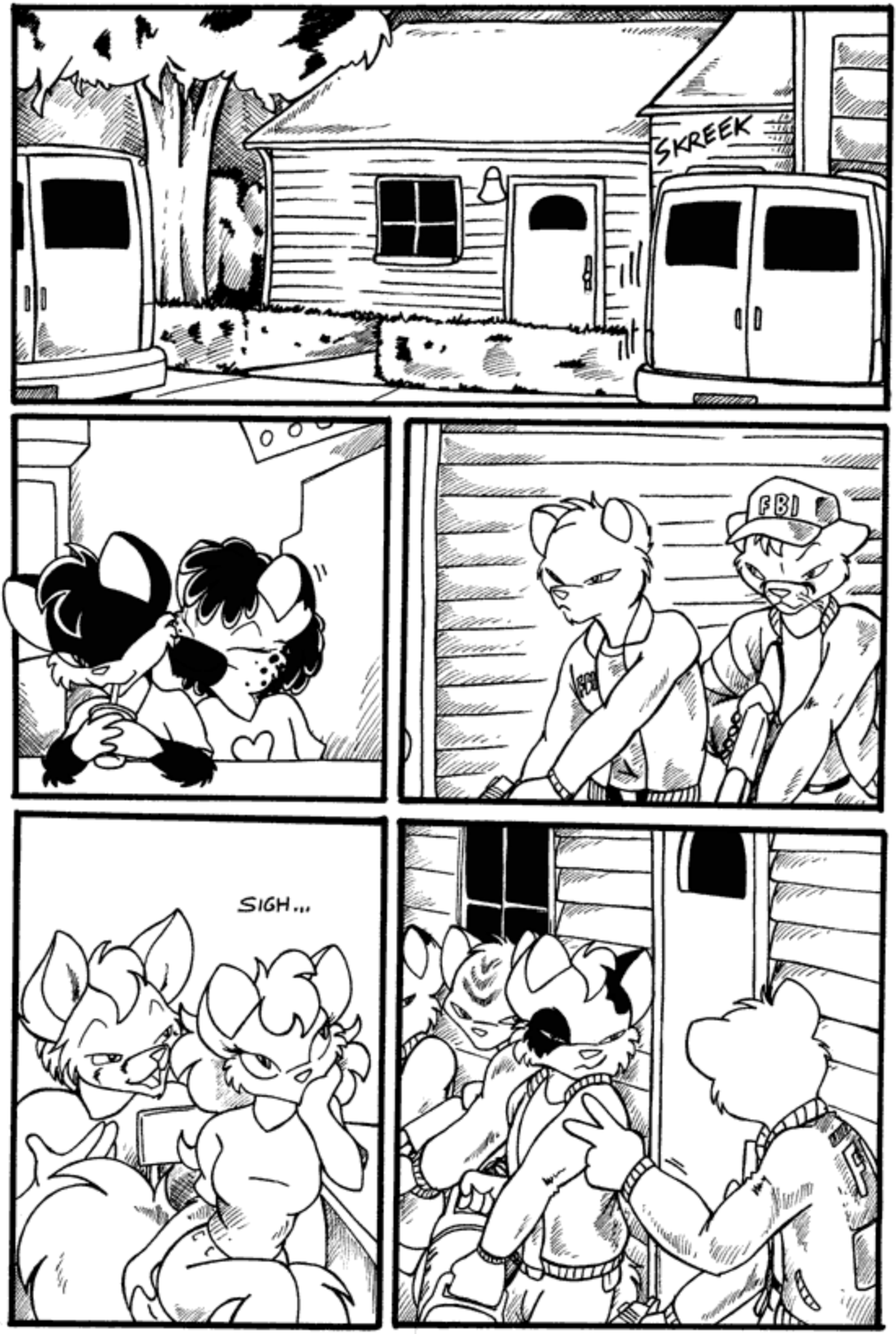
WHAT!?
NOW, MOM. REMEMBER WHEN YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE A LITTLE GIRL AND YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS WOULD USE THE "N" WORD, BECAUSE YOU GREW UP THAT WAY, AND WAS NEVER TAUGHT TO THINK DIFFERENTLY?
THEN YOU LATER LEARNED IT WAS DEROGATORY, WRONG, AND HURTFUL AND YOU STOPPED USING IT. SO IF YOU THINK THIS IS WRONG, NOW, MAYBE YOU JUST NEED TO STEP INTO THE '80s.
WHEN I USED THAT WORD, I WAS A DUMB LITTLE GIRL. I STOPPED USING IT BECAUSE I EVENTUALLY GREW UP...
... AND YOU'RE A DUMB LITTLE BOY THAT'S FIXIN' TO DO A LOT OF GROWIN'.
OH SHIT!

I WOULDN'T LET IT BECOME A TERRIBLE SOURCE OF WORRY MS. BLACK. SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AMONG CHILDREN SO YOUNG IS MORE COMMON THAN WE THINK. I WOULD TAKE THE TIME TO EXPLAIN TO FISK THE PROPER VALUES TO ASSOCIATE WITH SUCH A MATURE ACT, AND TRY TO ALLEVIATE ANY PSYCHO-SEXUAL CONDITIONING BEFORE IT TAKES ROOT.
OUR PATHS OF SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT, EXPLORATION, AND BEHAVIORS HELP DEFINE OUR ATTITUDES ABOUT IT. IF THIS IS DISRUPTED OR ACCELERATED, WE COULD WALK AWAY WITH SKEWED VALUES THAT MAKE IT HARDER TO RELATE TO OTHERS AS WE AGE.
HMP.
MUCH MORE OF MY CONCERN LIES WITH THE GIRL. WHILE SOME YOUNG GIRLS EXIBIT AGGRESSIVE SEXUAL FLIRTING... FORWARDNESS OF INTENTIONS AND A WILLINGNESS TO INITIATE INTERCOURSE AT THAT AGE IS EXTREMELY UNUSUAL.
SUCH BEHAVIOR SEEMS TO INDICATE ADVANCED STAGES OF REGULAR SEXUAL ABUSE FROM A FIGURE OF AUTHORITY, OR A BENEFACTOR. IN SUCH CASES, THE CHILD ASSOCIATES LOVE AND AFFECTION WITH SEXUAL ACTS. I WOULD MAKE SURE FISK DOESN'T GO NEAR HER HOUSE OR HER PARENTS. I THINK IT WOULD HELP IF I LOOKED DEEPER INTO HER SITUATION.
MEANWHILE I'D LIKE TO SCHEDULE SOME MORE APPOINTMENTS WITH FISK TO ASSESS WHAT HE'S GOING THROUGH...


HELLO?
MS. BLACK, THIS IS DR. HOLLINGS. I'VE GOT SOME VERY VERY IMPORTANT NEWS. DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?
SURE. I WAS JUST DOING THE DISHES.
I'VE BEEN TALKING TO THE FBI.
THE FBI?
YEAH...
THEY CHECKED OUT NIKKI'S PARENTS ON OUR REQUEST AND SUSPECT THAT HER FATHER IS ACTUALLY MUHAMMED AL AZIR, WANTED FOR THREE COUNTS OF MURDER, INCLUDING A COP, AND ONE COUNT OF RAPE. HE'S BEEN ON THEIR MOST WANTED LIST SINCE 1968.
CLINK
THEY'RE GOING TO GO GET HIM, SATURDAY. THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN. THEY WANT THE LITTLE GIRL COAXED OUT BEFORE THEY MOVE IN...
...
SHEILA... DO YOU THINK YOU...
HELLO? ARE YOU THERE?
IS MY LIFE JUST A BIG LIGHTNING ROD FOR DRAMA!?

HEY KIDS, I THINK WE SHOULD SPEND SATURDAY AT FUN CHARLIE'S
OOO! YEAH!
CHEW CHEW CHEW
FISK, YOU CAN INVITE YOUR LITTLE GIRLFRIEND IF SHE WANTS TO GO.
I THOUGHT I COULDN'T SEE HER.
I THINK AS LONG AS YOU'RE SUPERVISED, IT'LL BE OKAY.
HMM. I DON'T KNOW. IT MIGHT NOT BE HER KIND OF PLACE. I DON'T KNOW IF HER PARENTS WILL GIVE HER ANY MONEY...
FISK, JUST INVITE THE LITTLE URCHIN, OKAY?
HEY! WHAT ABOUT ONE OF MY FRIENDS?

I'LL BE HERE, KIDS. TRY TO STAY IN SIGHT AND MEET HERE IN AN HOUR!
OKAY!
YAY!
HEY, KID. TAKE IT EASY, HUH? I'M ALMOST OUT OF TOYS, HERE.
PAP
QUACK
HM. I HOPE THIS ISN'T THE QUIET BEFORE THE STORM.
SIGH. AT LEAST I HAVE SOME TIME TO RELAX.
AHH, I SEE I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH CUB-SITTING DUTY TODAY...
STUPID ME.


SKREEK
FBI
SIGH...

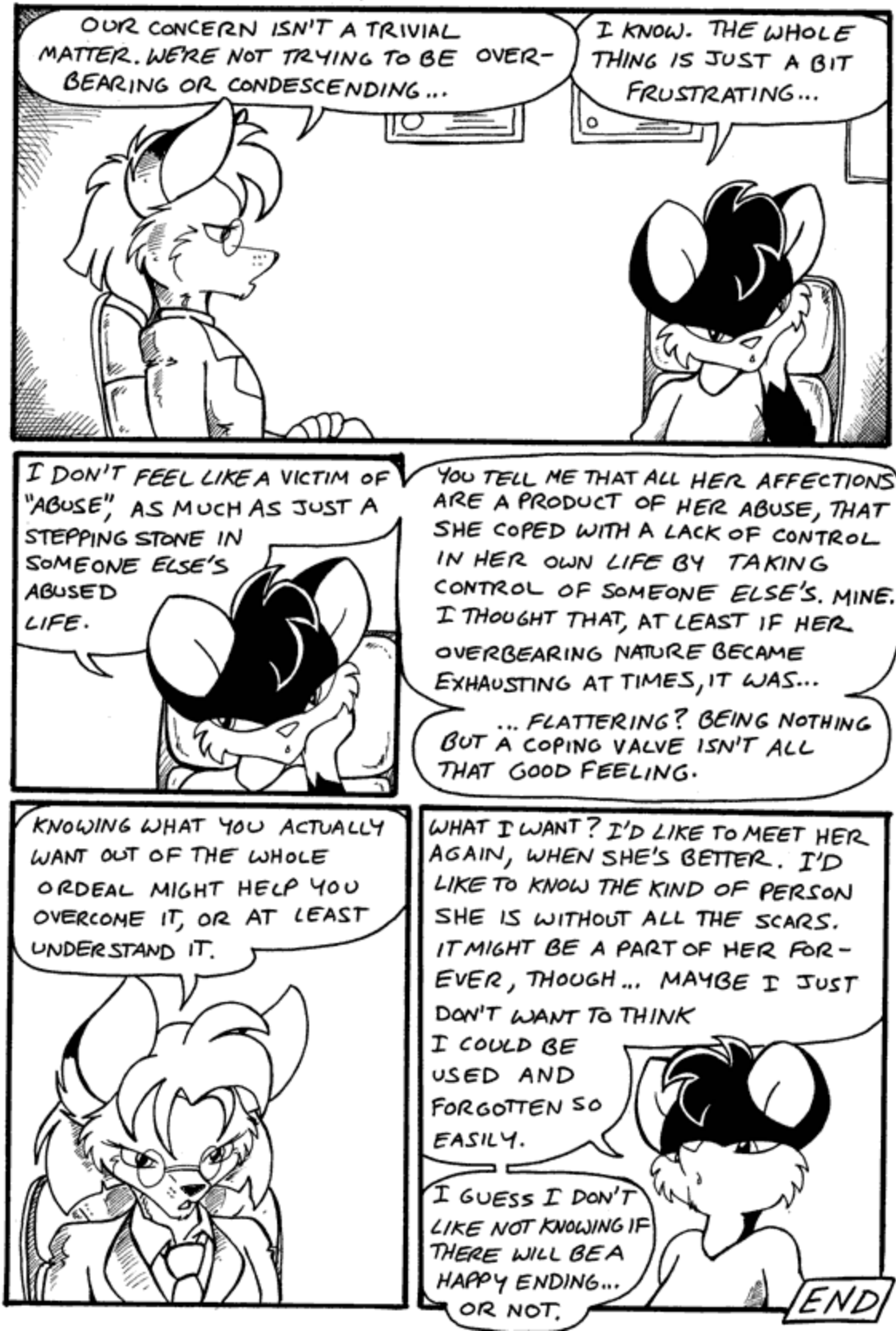
BAM
K KNOCK
GET DOWN! FBI!
GET ON THE GROUND!
CRAK
HANDS-
OH SHIT
GET DA FUCK OUTTA MY HOUSE!

BLAM
CHAK
FBI
BLAM
SCREAM!
SHOTS FIRED!
WHO'S SHOOTING!?
BEDROOM! WE GOT HIM!
FBI
FBI
IS HE DEAD?
PRETTY SURE.
YOU OKAY, TED?
CAN'T HEAR...
GET THE GIRL SOME CLOTHES
CHRIST.

SMIZL
KILL EVER
NIKKI.
NIKKI, YOUR FATHER'S BEEN KILLED. WE'LL HAVE TO GO SOON.
GOOD.

WE'VE GOT TO GO FIND YOU A NEW HOME.
UMMM...
...I'LL LIVE WITH FISK.
FISK'S MOTHER IS ALREADY TAKING CARE OF TWO KITTENS.
CAN I STILL SEE FISK?
IF YOU LIVE CLOSE ENOUGH. THERE ARE LOTS OF ADULTS WHO WANT A PUP TO RAISE, AND THEY WON'T HURT YOU.
OH.
CAN YOU CARRY MY TOYS?

HER FATHER DID THAT TO HER?
IT'S POSSIBLE. I'M SORRY, FISK.
I CAN'T IMAGINE A PARENT BEING A CRIMINAL. ADULT AUTHORITY SEEMS SO QUESTIONABLE.
MOST OF US JUST DO OUR BEST, HONEY...
I JUST-
AH! THERE YOU ARE!
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO LEAVE AND I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D-
HEY! HEY YOU!
I'M TALKING TO HER, ALRIGHT?
DON'T BE A RUDE BASTARD.
SHE DOESN'T SEEM INTERESTED, ANYWAY. SO JUST GET LOST, OKAY!?
GRUMBLE... LITTLE BRAT...
WHERE WAS I?


OUR CONCERN ISN'T A TRIVIAL MATTER. WE'RE NOT TRYING TO BE OVER-BEARING OR CONDESCENDING...
I KNOW. THE WHOLE THING IS JUST A BIT FRUSTRATING...
I DON'T FEEL LIKE A VICTIM OF "ABUSE", AS MUCH AS JUST A STEPPING STONE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S ABUSED LIFE.
YOU TELL ME THAT ALL HER AFFECTIONS ARE A PRODUCT OF HER ABUSE, THAT SHE COPED WITH A LACK OF CONTROL IN HER OWN LIFE BY TAKING CONTROL OF SOMEONE ELSE'S. MINE. I THOUGHT THAT, AT LEAST IF HER OVERBEARING NATURE BECAME EXHAUSTING AT TIMES, IT WAS...
... FLATTERING? BEING NOTHING BUT A COPING VALVE ISN'T ALL THAT GOOD FEELING.
KNOWING WHAT YOU ACTUALLY WANT OUT OF THE WHOLE ORDEAL MIGHT HELP YOU OVERCOME IT, OR AT LEAST UNDERSTAND IT.
WHAT I WANT? I'D LIKE TO MEET HER AGAIN, WHEN SHE'S BETTER. I'D LIKE TO KNOW THE KIND OF PERSON SHE IS WITHOUT ALL THE SCARS. IT MIGHT BE A PART OF HER FOR-EVER, THOUGH... MAYBE I JUST DON'T WANT TO THINK I COULD BE USED AND FORGOTTEN SO EASILY.
I GUESS I DON'T LIKE NOT KNOWING IF THERE WILL BE A HAPPY ENDING... OR NOT.
END

UP AND AT 'EM, BABY! IT'S THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!
RUSTLE RUSTLE
MMRM RM RRM MURMUR ...
RISE AND SHINE, FUZZY BUNS!!
AAAAAAA!
EVIL HAS THE VOICE OF AN ANGEL...
LUUUCY!

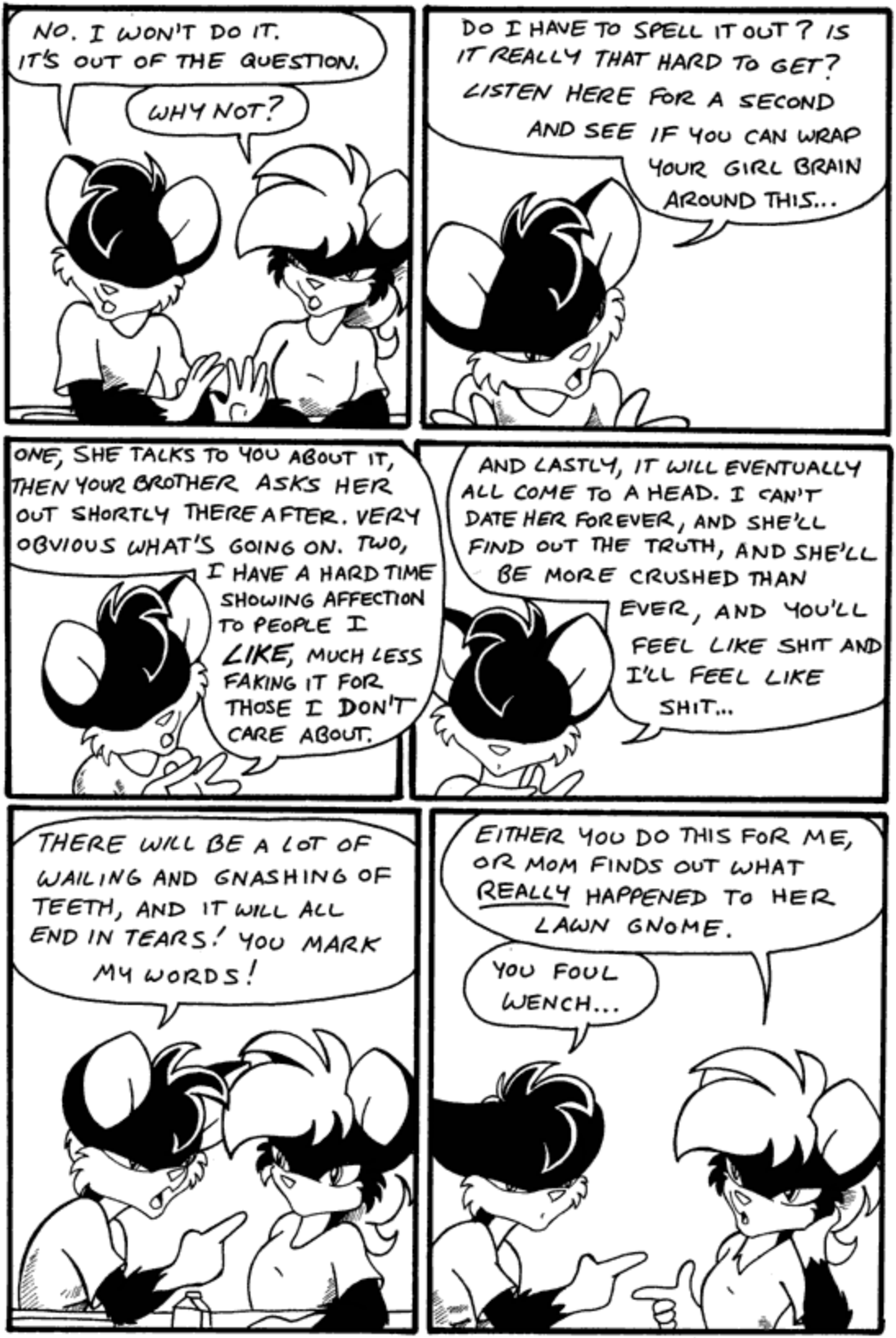
STRETCH
MMMMMM!
POP
POP
SMACK
SMACK
HMMMMM...
STRETCH
HA! YES!
SEE? YOU SHOULD HAVE A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE ABOUT SCHOOL, LIKE YOUR SISTER.
MUNCH

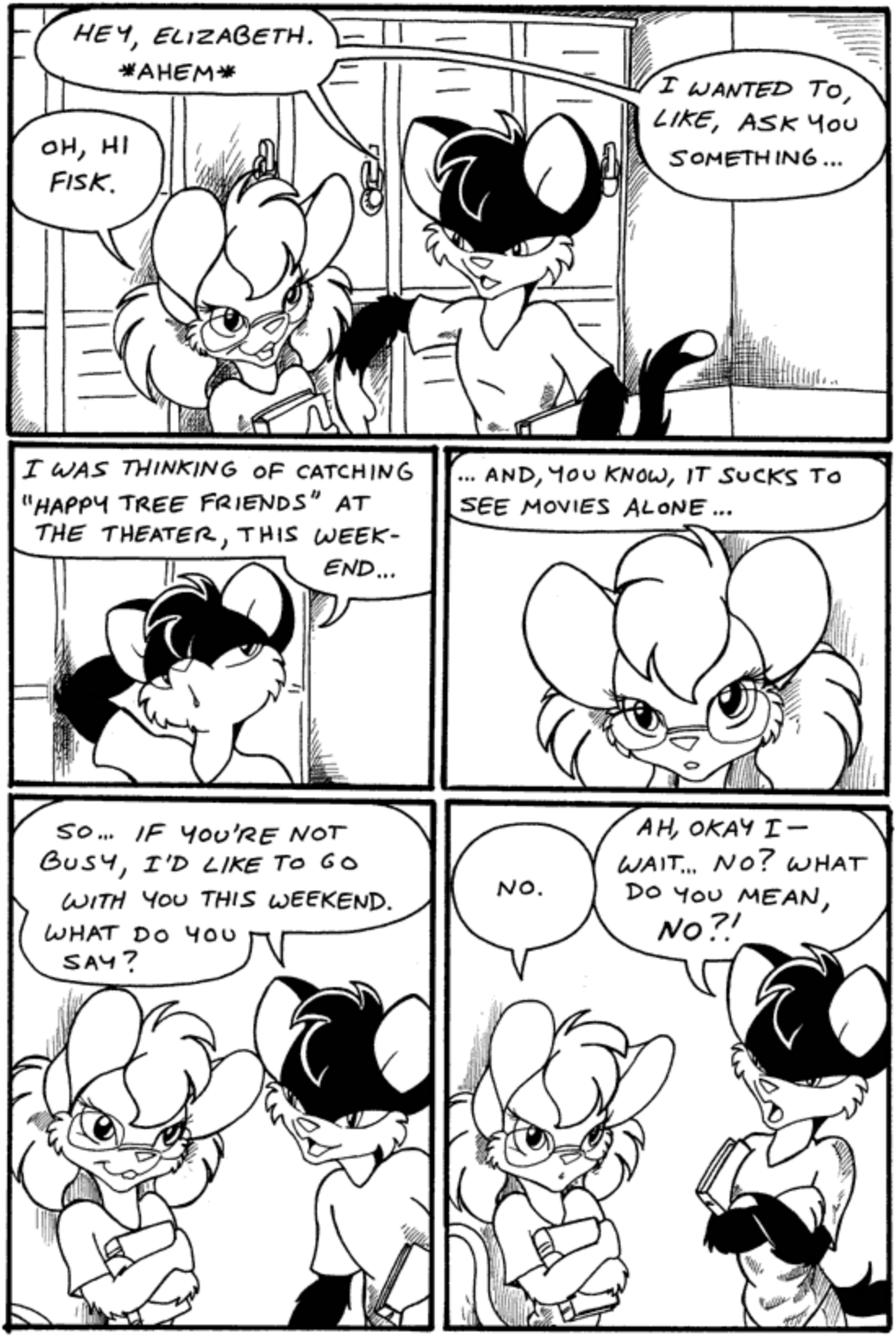
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE EXCITED TO GO TO SCHOOL. THE SUMMER WAS GOOD TO ME, AND I'M ARMED WITH A NEW WARDROBE.
I GOT RID OF THAT CRUMMY BOW. IT MADE ME LOOK TOO MUCH LIKE A LITTLE GIRL, WHICH I'M NOT ANYMORE.
THERE'S SO MUCH I NEED TO DO. I NEED TO START WEARING EARRINGS, MAYBE SOME TIGHT SKIRTS, BIG PUNKY BELTS LIKE CINDY LAUPER...
AND SOME LOWWWW CUT SHIRTS TO SHOW OFF MY SWEET NEW BOY MAGNETS! AREN'T THEY NICE?
FUCK.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
BLINK
BLINK

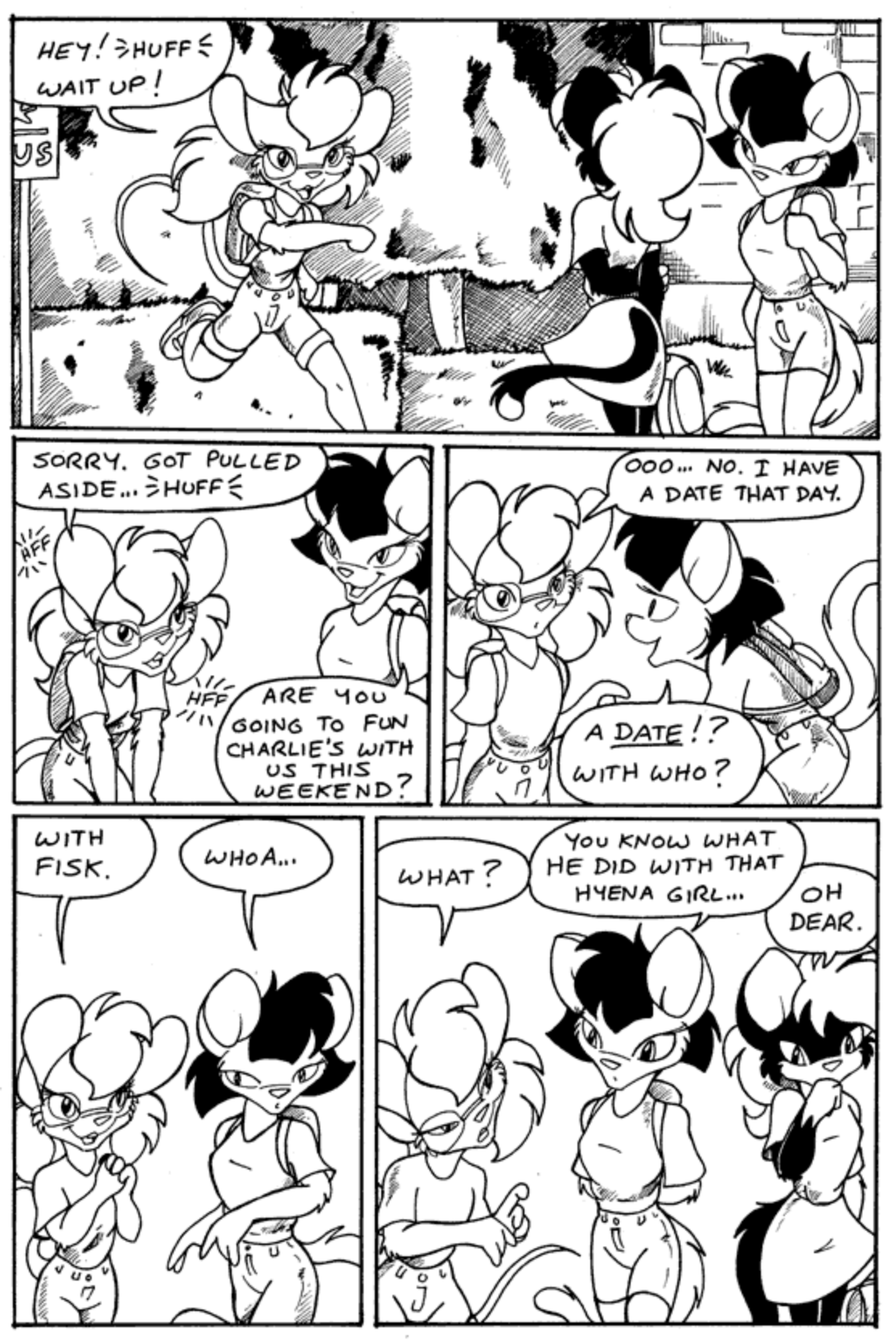
ELIZABETH?
SORRY ABOUT THAT, LUCY.
WHAT'S WRONG?
PAH! LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE AWESOME. LOOK AT ME! I'M GOING TO BE AN AWKWARD GEEK FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
IT'S THE SEVENTH GRADE! EVERYONE AROUND ME IS TURNING BEAUTIFUL AND HOOKING UP!
HEY, MY MOTHER SAYS THERE'S SOMEONE FOR EVERYONE.
YAH. I COULD WAIT 'TIL I'M EIGHTEEN AND MY MOM WILL HOOK ME UP WITH SOME NERDY PHD...
I CAN HEAR HER NOW: "BUT HONEY, HE'S A DOCTAH!" NEVER MIND HE'S FIVE-ONE AND OWNS SIX FERRETS, MOTHER! "WHAT!? YA DON'T WANT TO MARRY A POOR HUCKLEBERRY!" AND THEN...

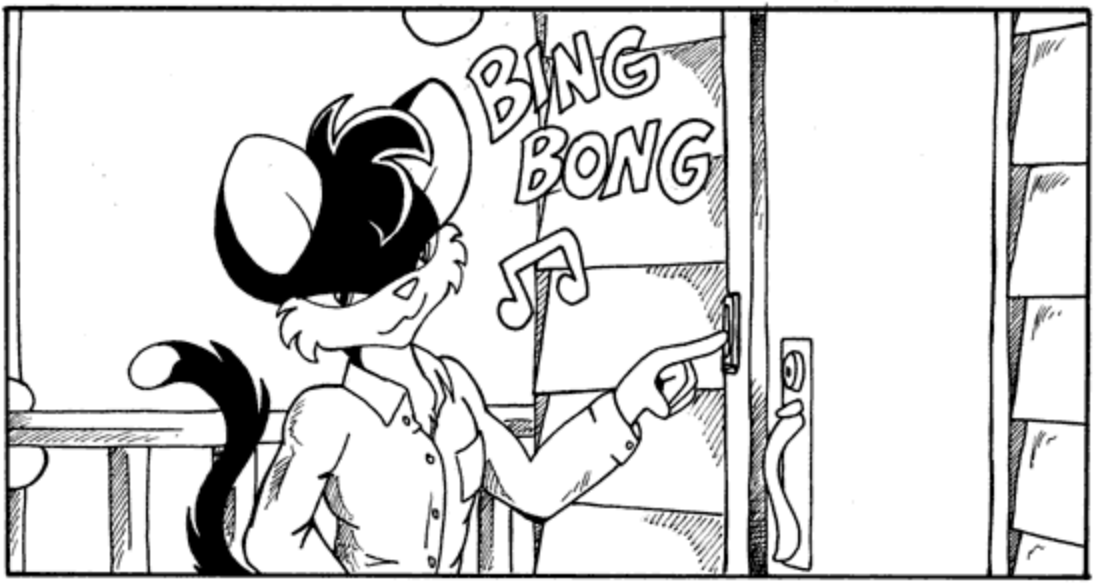
HI, FISK!
HEY, HAVE YOU SEEN ANY CUTE GIRLS THAT YOU WANT TO ASK OUT, YET?
MUNCH
'CAUSE IF NOT, SEE, I KNOW SOMEONE...
IT WOULD KIND OF BE DOING ME A FAVOR, IN A WAY, TOO...
IN SUMMARY... ... YOU HAVE TO ASK ELIZABETH WACHSMAN OUT ON A DATE.
IS THIS A "THE FREE WORLD WILL PERISH, OTHERWISE" KIND OF HAVE-TO, OR A "MY SISTER WILL PITCH A FUSS, OTHERWISE" KIND OF HAVE-TO?
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!


NO. I WON'T DO IT. IT'S OUT OF THE QUESTION.
WHY NOT?
DO I HAVE TO SPELL IT OUT? IS IT REALLY THAT HARD TO GET? LISTEN HERE FOR A SECOND AND SEE IF YOU CAN WRAP YOUR GIRL BRAIN AROUND THIS...
ONE, SHE TALKS TO YOU ABOUT IT, THEN YOUR BROTHER ASKS HER OUT SHORTLY THERE AFTER. VERY OBVIOUS WHAT'S GOING ON. TWO, I HAVE A HARD TIME SHOWING AFFECTION TO PEOPLE I LIKE, MUCH LESS FAKING IT FOR THOSE I DON'T CARE ABOUT.
AND LASTLY, IT WILL EVENTUALLY ALL COME TO A HEAD. I CAN'T DATE HER FOREVER, AND SHE'LL FIND OUT THE TRUTH, AND SHE'LL BE MORE CRUSHED THAN EVER, AND YOU'LL FEEL LIKE SHIT AND I'LL FEEL LIKE SHIT...
THERE WILL BE A LOT OF WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH, AND IT WILL ALL END IN TEARS! YOU MARK MY WORDS!
EITHER YOU DO THIS FOR ME, OR MOM FINDS OUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO HER LAWN GNOME.
YOU FOUL WENCH...


HEY, ELIZABETH. *AHEM*
OH, HI FISK.
I WANTED TO, LIKE, ASK YOU SOMETHING...
I WAS THINKING OF CATCHING "HAPPY TREE FRIENDS" AT THE THEATER, THIS WEEK-END...
... AND, YOU KNOW, IT SUCKS TO SEE MOVIES ALONE...
SO... IF YOU'RE NOT BUSY, I'D LIKE TO GO WITH YOU THIS WEEKEND. WHAT DO YOU SAY?
NO.
AH, OKAY I— WAIT... NO? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NO?!

SORRY, FISK. IT'S JUST A LITTLE STRANGE. DID YOUR SISTER PUT YOU UP TO THIS?
NO WAY!
IF YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER, I APPRECIATE IT, BUT I'M NOT DENSE. I CAN'T SEE MYSELF AS YOUR TYPE AT ALL.
ARE YOU KIDDING? WHY WOULD I WANT TO DATE A DITZ? YOU'RE SHARP AS A TACK AND YOU HAVE A CUTE FACE.
YOU'RE SWEET, FISK, BUT IT IS KIND OF SCARY. HOW CAN I BELIEVE YOU?
207
SQUEAKM MMM MF!!


HEY! >HUFF< WAIT UP!
SORRY. GOT PULLED ASIDE... >HUFF<
HFF
HFF
ARE YOU GOING TO FUN CHARLIE'S WITH US THIS WEEKEND?
OOO... NO. I HAVE A DATE THAT DAY.
A DATE!? WITH WHO?
WITH FISK.
WHOA...
WHAT?
YOU KNOW WHAT HE DID WITH THAT HYENA GIRL...
OH DEAR.


BING
BONG

HMM. I'VE NEVER BEEN ON A "TRADITIONAL" KIND OF DATE BEFORE. I NEVER THOUGHT IT'D BE WITH ELIZABETH...
SHE SEEMS NICE EVEN IF SHE'S NOT "HOT."

STILL, I HATE DOING THIS ON SOME FALSE PRETENSE. NONETHELESS, THOSE THINGS I TOLD HER WERE TRUE, AND SHE KISSES WELL ENOUGH.
MAYBE IF I CAN REALLY FALL FOR HER, IT WON'T BE SO MUCH OF A LIE.

HI, FISK! I'M READY TO GO!
WHOA.

JERRY, DID YOU SEE ELIZABETH LEAVING WITH SHEILA'S SON, THIS AFTERNOON?
YES. SHE WAS GOING TO A MOVIE.
IS THAT A GOOD IDEA? ARE WE GOING TO LET HER DATE BOYS WHO AREN'T JEWISH?
KELLY, THEY'RE GOING TO SEE A MOVIE. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO GO GET MARRIED. SHE COULD STAND TO HAVE FUN WHILE SHE IS STILL A CHILD.
BESIDES, SHE SEEMS TO LIKE HIM. IF WE FORBID HER FROM SEEING HIM, HE WILL SEEM MORE ENTICING. THEN, SHE WILL ELOPE WHEN SHE IS SIXTEEN, AND THEY WILL LIVE IN A TRAILER WITH NO WHEELS IN LUMPKIN COUNTY, WITH CHICKENS.

CONCESSIO
I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO SEE "HAPPY TREE FRIENDS"?
WE ARE.
THEN WHY DID YOU BUY US TICKETS TO "BAMBI'S FRIENDS"?
BECAUSE "HAPPY TREE FRIENDS" IS RATED R.
WHY IS A CARTOON MOVIE RATED R?
EVERYTHING GOOD IS RATED R. AFTER YOU.

CRREEEEEEK...
SCOOCH
ULP.
...PURRPURR PURR PURR PURRPURRR
PURR PURR PURR PURR PURR PUR

AND THEN THE SHARK BIT HER HEAD CLEAN OFF! THIS LEVEL OF CARTOON VIOLENCE HAS SPARKED SOME KIND OF GIDDY, VISCERAL FEELING I'VE NEVER FELT FROM A FORM OF ENTERTAIN-MENT MEDIA...
YEAH, I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING.
I'M HOME. THANK YOU.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
KISS
NEXT WEEKEND, YOU'RE INVITED TO DINNER. MY PARENTS WOULD LIKE TO MEET YOU.
OKAY.
GOODNIGHT!
WAIT... PARENTS?

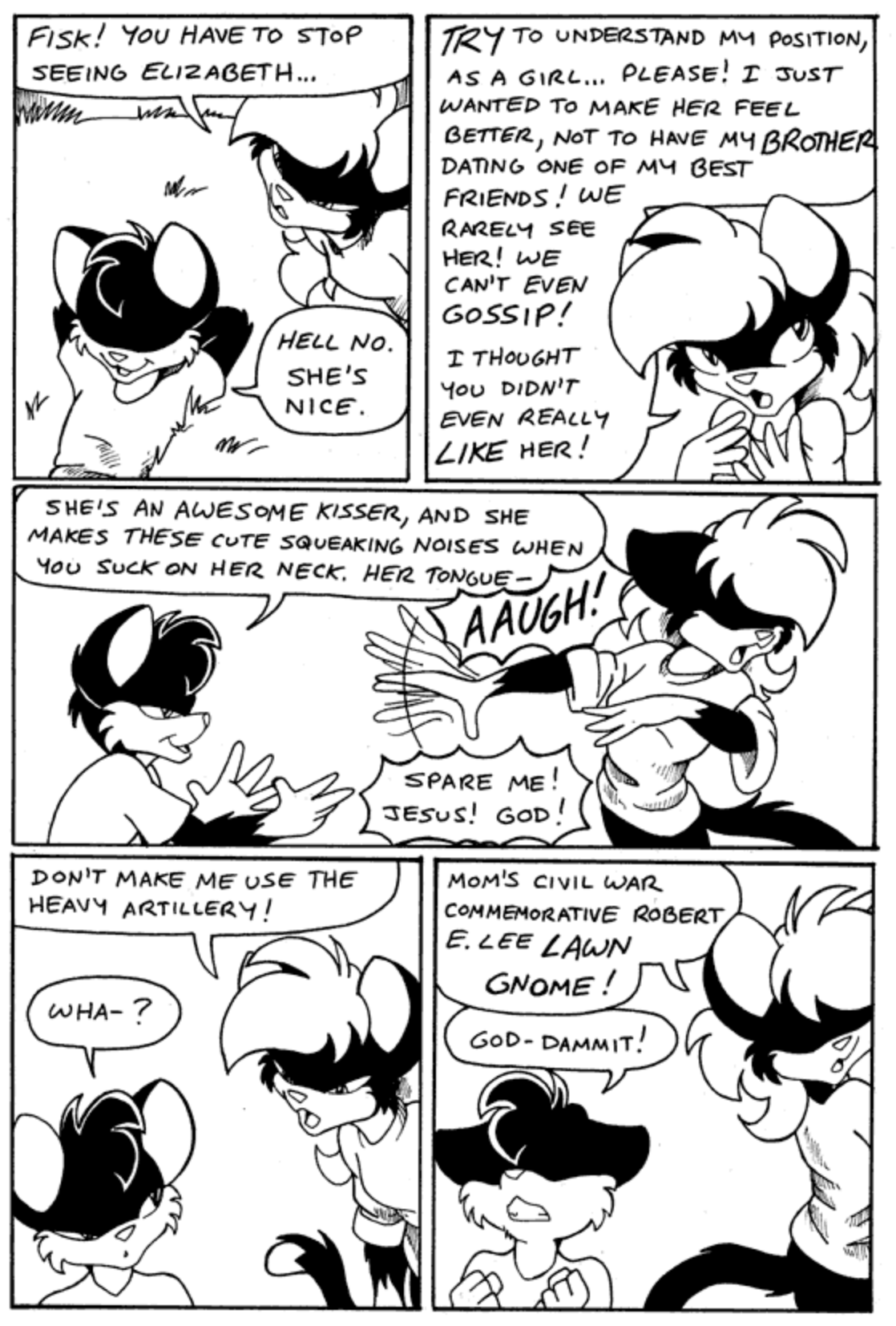
BING BONG
HEY, LUCY.
FISK! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I AM HERE TO HAVE DINNER WITH THE WACHSMANS. WHAT, MAY I ASK, ARE YOU DOING HERE?
SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ON OUR POOL TEAM AT FUN CHARLIE'S, YOU KNOW, LIKE... EVERY SATURDAY!
OH. WELL, I THINK SHE HAS OTHER MORE IMPORTANT PRIORITIES, RIGHT NOW.
TOODLES!
THIS IS NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND!

ERM... HOW MANY SISTERS DO YOU HAVE?
TSK. ONLY THREE!
GIRLS! LEAVE THAT POOR TOM ALONE! RUN ALONG! INTO THE KITCHEN!
CLAP CLAP
EEEE!
IS DADDY IN THE BASEMENT?
YES HE IS. YOU CAN GO SEE HIM. I THINK I HAVE ENOUGH HELP IN THE KITCHEN.

MY LITTLE PUMPKIN.
HI, DADDY!
AH, IS THIS YOUR NEW BOYFRIEND?
EE! DON'T EMBARASS ME!
I'M NOT! I HAVE ALL NIGHT TO DO THAT...
YOU BETTER NOT!
I'LL BE GOOD. RUN AND HELP YOUR MOTHER WITH DINNER.
FISK AND I WILL BOND, AS MEN.
HEE!

YOU LIKE LOOKING AT THE GUNS? YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF GUN THIS IS?
UM... AN OLD GUN?
IT'S MORE THAN AN OLD GUN. LOOK AT IT. IT IS A COLLECTION OF CRAFTED PARTS COMING TOGETHER TO CREATE A POWERFUL INSTRUMENT.
CHAK
THIS GUN IS LIKE A RELATIONSHIP. YOU ARE THE WOOD AND SHE IS THE METAL. WITHOUT ONE ANOTHER, YOU DON'T WORK. YOU FORGE EACH OTHER TO ACCOMIDATE THE NEEDS OF THE RELATIONSHIP'S COMPONENTS. YOU ARE DESIGNED TO CERTAIN TOLERANCES. YOU CAN ENDURE EXTREMES FOR SHORT PERIODS, BUT TOO MUCH HARSH WEATHER, OR ROUGH TREATMENT, AND THE WOOD CRACKS, WARPS, AND TURNS GNARLED AND BITTER. IF YOU TRY TO PUT TOO MUCH POWER THROUGH THE CHAMBER, THE METAL MAY STRESS AND FORM FRACTURES. FORCING IT TO DO THINGS FOR WHICH IT IS NOT DESIGNED WILL CAUSE THE METAL TO WEAKEN SLOWLY, THE DANGER BUILDING OVER TIME THROUGH REPEATED MISUSE...
... AND POW! IT EXPLODES IN YOUR FACE!
THE BLAST CAN EVEN KILL YOU...
THUMP THUMP THUMP

SO, I ASKED OUT ONE OF MY SISTER'S FRIENDS...
OH?
YEAH. SHE'S REAL SWEET AND FAIRLY NORMAL.
WHEW!
REALLY.
SHE'S FROM A HUGE JEWISH FAMILY. IT'S INTERESTING TO SEE HOW A COMPLETE FAMILY BEHAVES TOGETHER.
HER FATHER IS VERY COOL, EVEN IF HE LOOKS LIKE A BANKER. HE'S INVITED ME TO GO SHOOTING WITH HIM AND HIS SON, IF MY MOTHER ALLOWS.
IT'S GOOD FOR YOU TO HAVE A POSITIVE MALE INFLUENCE IN YOUR LIFE. YOU NEED TO SEE AND EXPERIENCE HEALTHY, NORMAL LIVES, AND REALIZE THAT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH NIKKI WASN'T THE IDEAL.
YEAH... I DON'T THINK I CAN DO THOSE THINGS I DID WITH NIKKI, TO ELIZABETH. THAT'D FEEL KIND OF LIKE... PISSING IN FRONT OF A NUN...


FISK! YOU HAVE TO STOP SEEING ELIZABETH...
HELL NO. SHE'S NICE.
TRY TO UNDERSTAND MY POSITION, AS A GIRL... PLEASE! I JUST WANTED TO MAKE HER FEEL BETTER, NOT TO HAVE MY BROTHER DATING ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS! WE RARELY SEE HER! WE CAN'T EVEN GOSSIP!
I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T EVEN REALLY LIKE HER!
SHE'S AN AWESOME KISSER, AND SHE MAKES THESE CUTE SQUEAKING NOISES WHEN YOU SUCK ON HER NECK. HER TONGUE—
AAUGH!
SPARE ME! JESUS! GOD!
DON'T MAKE ME USE THE HEAVY ARTILLERY!
WHA-?
MOM'S CIVIL WAR COMMEMORATIVE ROBERT E. LEE LAWN GNOME!
GOD-DAMMIT!

GO AHEAD AND TELL MOM, YOU HEARTLESS BITCH! I'LL TAKE THE HEAT!
IT CAN'T LAST, FISK! I'VE WATCHED ENOUGH TV TO KNOW HOW TEEN ROMANCE ENDS. IT'LL BE EASIER NOW.
I TOLD YOU THIS WOULD HAPPEN! YOU TOLD ME TO ASK HER OUT IN THE FIRST PLACE!
I-
AW FUCK!
UM... PERHAPS I SHOULD HANDLE THIS, FISK...

FISK, I KNOW HOW TO TALK TO HER!
YOU'VE MESSED UP ENOUGH! STAY OUT!
BUT WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SAY TO HER?
IT IS MY FAULT, ULTIMATELY. I LET MYSELF BE PRESSURED INTO SOMETHING DISHONEST. I THINK SHE NEEDS TO HEAR THE TRUTH, NOW.

HELLO, FISK.
HELLO, SIR. I WAS WONDERING IF ELIZABETH WAS AVAILABLE?
SHE WENT TO HER ROOM, UPSET. SOMETHING'S WRONG?
A LITTLE.
A MISUNDERSTANDING? PROPER COMMUNICATION CAN SET THINGS RIGHT?
I HOPE SO. THERE ARE SOME THINGS I NEED TO CLARIFY.
YOU LIKE HER, RIGHT?
VERY MUCH.
EXPLAIN EVERYTHING TO HER. SHE'S A SMART GIRL.

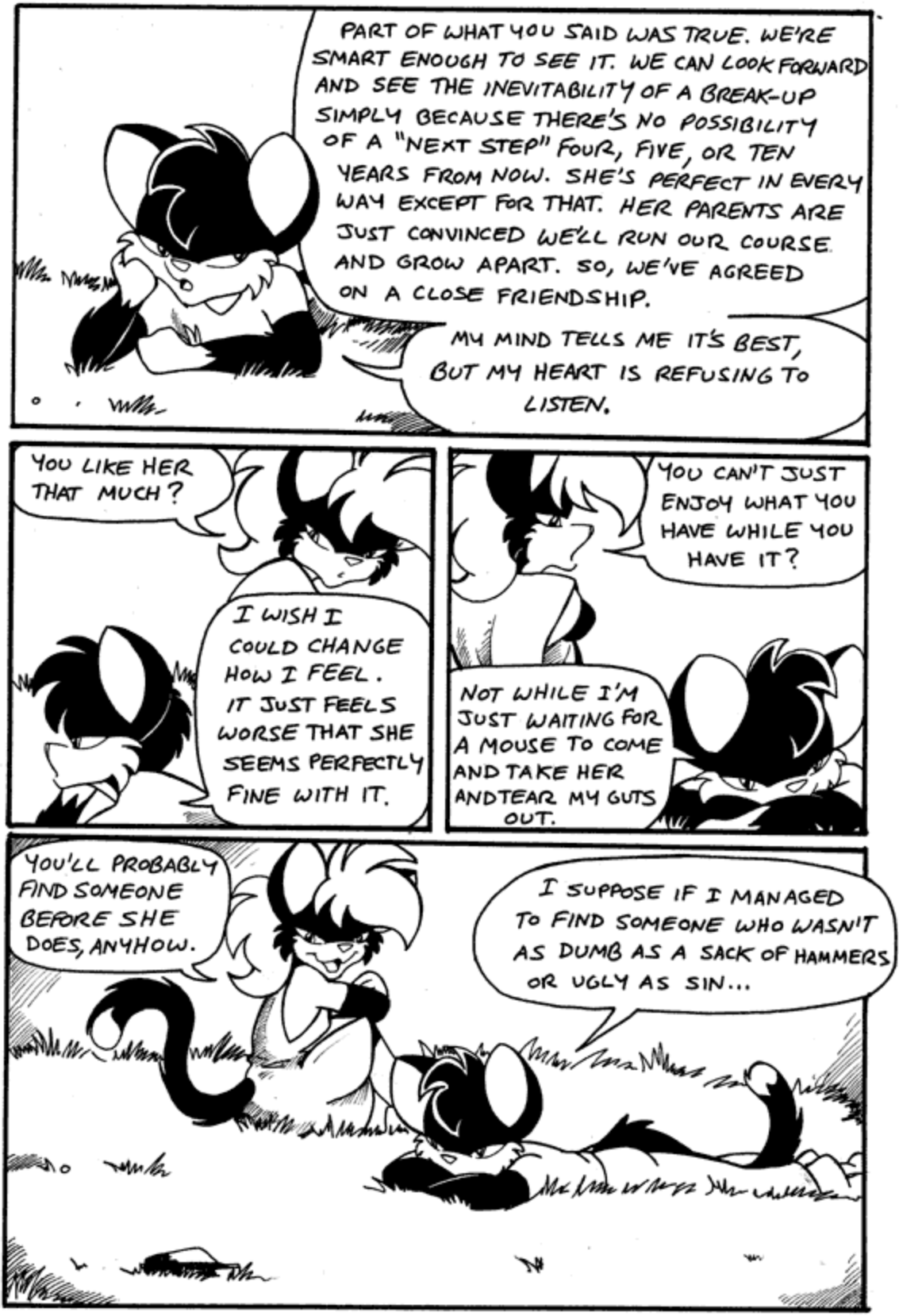
CREEK
CLICK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU LIED TO ME.

I'M REALLY NOT GOOD WITH WORDS. I HAVE TO TRY AT LEAST... BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH. LUCY WANTED TO SET US UP, AND I GOT PRESSURED INTO IT.
BUT, THAT'S NOT ALL OF IT...
WHEN WE WERE TALKING IN THE HALLWAY, I REALIZED EVERYTHING I WAS SAYING WAS TRUE. MOST BOYS JUST LOOK FOR SOMETHING PRETTY. I GUESS I MAY HAVE GOTTEN BURNED OUT ON PURELY PHYSICAL GIRLS WHEN I WAS WITH NIKKI... I DIDN'T KNOW HOW NICE IT'D BE TO HAVE A GIRL AS A FRIEND.
I'M SORRY I LIED, INITIALLY. IF YOU WANT TO KEEP HATING ME, I'LL UNDERSTAND AND I'LL LET YOU BE. BUT, I HAVE TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I REALLY FELL FOR YOU... ... BEFORE I GO.

IS FISK JOINING US FOR DINNER, AGAIN?
I DIDN'T THINK SO. WHY DO YOU ASK?
I SAW HIM GO UPSTAIRS.
YES. HE WENT UPSTAIRS TO SPEAK TO ELIZABETH ABOUT SOMETHING.
YES, BUT I DIDN'T SEE HIM LEAVE.
HE'S BEEN UP THERE FOR FORTY MINUTES!
RIGHT. OKAY. I'LL GO CHECK.

THAT'S MY AUNT. SHE LIVES IN NEW YORK WITH AN APARTMENT FULL OF FERRETS AND A LITTLE WIMP FOR A HUSBAND. SHE HATES MY DAD.
I THINK A FAMILY THIS BIG WOULD BE MOSTLY EMBARASSING.
I THINK IT'S NICE TO HAVE HISTORY. THAT'S MY MOTHER'S FATHER. HE DIED FIGHTING THE EGYPTIANS.
YOUR DAD DIED FIGHTING, RIGHT? IF HE WERE ALIVE YOU'D BE MORE PROUD THAN EMBARASSED.
YOU KNOW... I HAVEN'T REALLY THOUGHT—
ELIZABETH?
DINNER'S ALMOST READY. FISK CAN JOIN US IF HE'D LIKE.
OKAY!

HOW'D IT GO?
IT WENT OKAY.
ARE YOU STILL GOING OUT?
WE'RE GOOD FRIENDS. "KISSING FRIENDS".
YOU DON'T SOUND HAPPY.
PLISH
PLISH
PLISH
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.

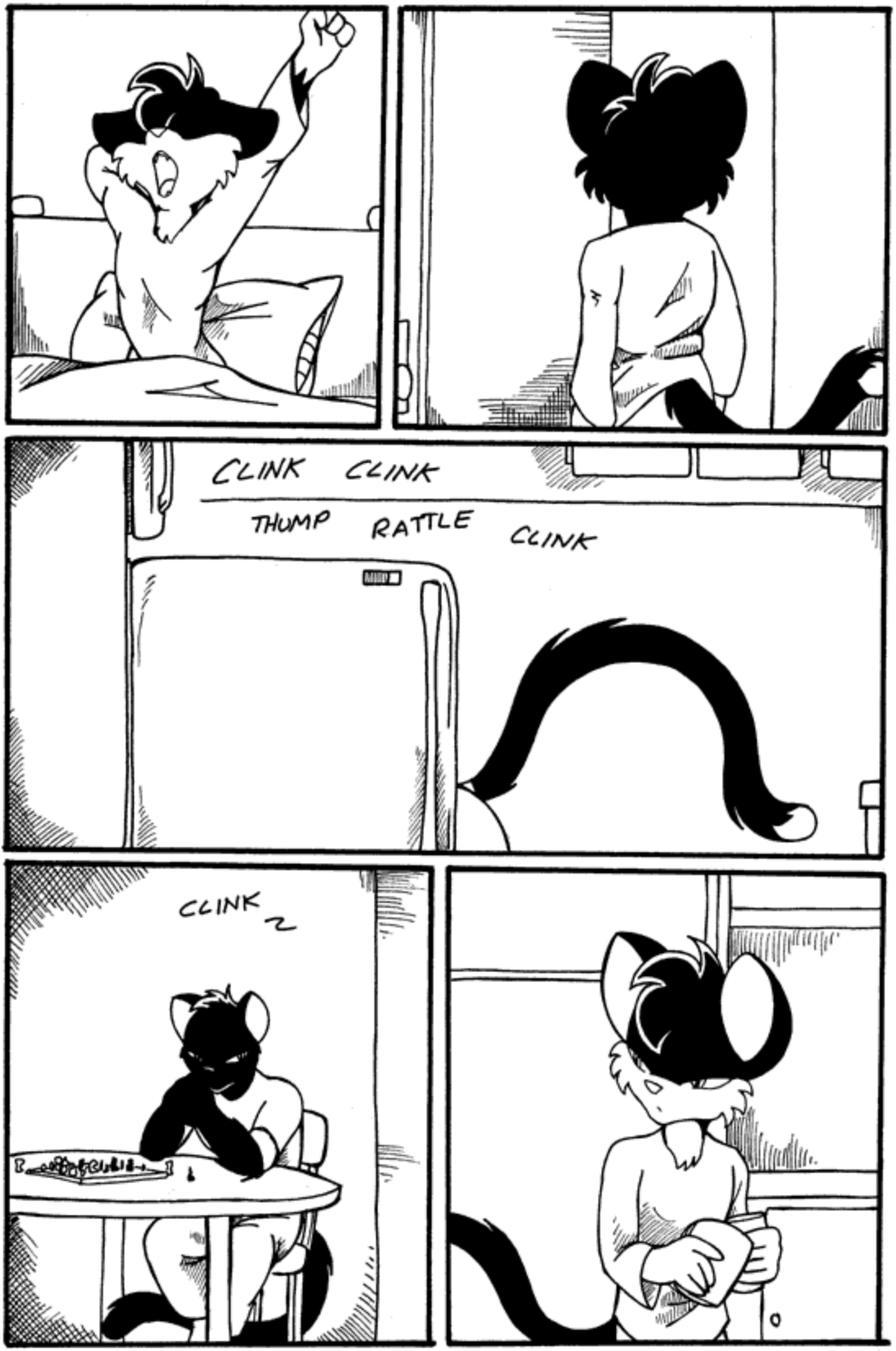

PART OF WHAT YOU SAID WAS TRUE. WE'RE SMART ENOUGH TO SEE IT. WE CAN LOOK FORWARD AND SEE THE INEVITABILITY OF A BREAK-UP SIMPLY BECAUSE THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF A "NEXT STEP" FOUR, FIVE, OR TEN YEARS FROM NOW. SHE'S PERFECT IN EVERY WAY EXCEPT FOR THAT. HER PARENTS ARE JUST CONVINCED WE'LL RUN OUR COURSE AND GROW APART. SO, WE'VE AGREED ON A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP.
MY MIND TELLS ME IT'S BEST, BUT MY HEART IS REFUSING TO LISTEN.
YOU LIKE HER THAT MUCH?
I WISH I COULD CHANGE HOW I FEEL. IT JUST FEELS WORSE THAT SHE SEEMS PERFECTLY FINE WITH IT.
YOU CAN'T JUST ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE WHILE YOU HAVE IT?
NOT WHILE I'M JUST WAITING FOR A MOUSE TO COME AND TAKE HER ANDTEAR MY GUTS OUT.
YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND SOMEONE BEFORE SHE DOES, ANYHOW.
I SUPPOSE IF I MANAGED TO FIND SOMEONE WHO WASN'T AS DUMB AS A SACK OF HAMMERS OR UGLY AS SIN...

SIGH...
END

WIRRRRRR
LOOK AT THIS MESS!
BEEP
BEEPLE
MY GRACIOUS!
PUT ON A SWEATER!
SCHLORP
THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE THE WRECK OF THE HESPERAS!

WIRRR
RRRR
...R
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE SPASTIC CLEANING, MOM?
WE'RE HAVING COMPANY.
WHO?
THE KELSOS ARE STOPPING OVER FOR THE NIGHT ON THEIR WAY TO FLORIDA.
WHO?
THEY'RE OLD FRIENDS OF MINE AND YOUR FATHER'S. THEY HELPED ME A LOT WHEN HE DIED.
OH. DO THEY SLEEP EARLY?
STUFF
STUFF
YES. THE STEREO WILL BE PLAYED AT A TOLERABLE LEVEL, PLEASE.
=SIGH= ALL RIGHT.
IF MADONNA'S HALF AS TALENTED AS YOU CLAIM, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY HER AT A REASONABLE, INDOOR VOLUME AS WELL.
FINE.

COME IN, YOU TWO! HOW WAS YOUR TRIP?
GLAD IT'S NEARLY OVER!
HOW ABOUT YOU, MM? DOING OKAY?
HANGING IN THERE, MIMI.
AND THE KITTENS? I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE THEY WERE THIS BIG.
GROWING LIKE WEEDS!
:GASP: IS THAT FISK? HE LOOKS JUST LIKE HIS FATHER!
?
I SURE REMEMBER THOSE EYES.


CLINK CLINK
THUMP RATTLE CLINK
CLINK 2

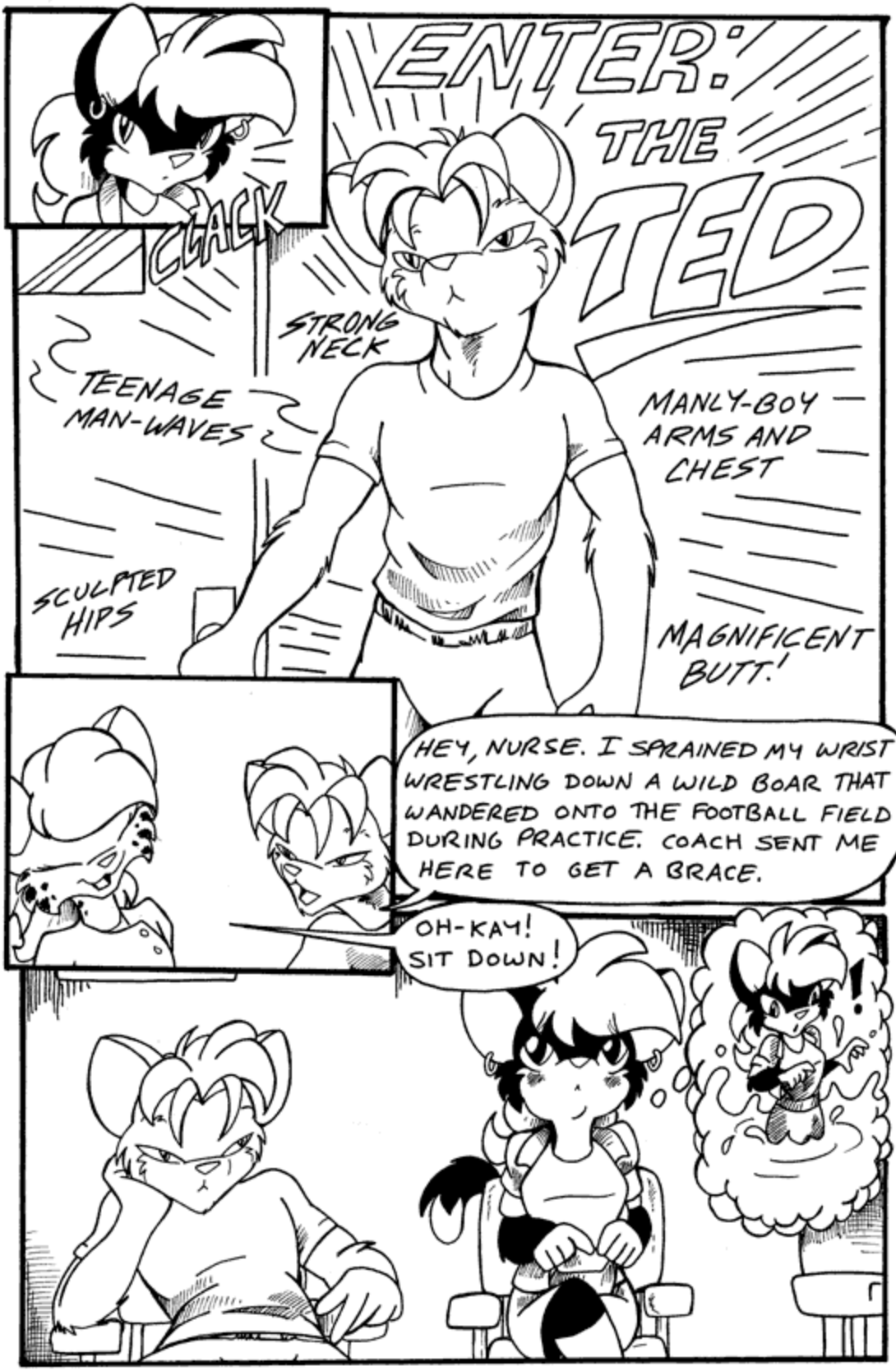
YOU PLAY CHESS BY YOURSELF?
WHEN THERE'S NO ONE ELSE AROUND.
I USED TO PLAY WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, BUT IT'S BEEN A FEW YEARS.
WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT TOO BUSY, PULL UP A CHAIR AND TAKE A SIDE? WE'LL SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.
OKAY. SURE. TURN THE BOARD. I'LL TAKE BLACK.

WHY'D YOU CHOOSE BLACK, FISK?
NOT SURE. IT ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS A SNEAKY COLOR
IT'S TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH EVIL, OR THE BAD SIDE OF A FIGHT.
I DON'T THINK THE BLACK PIECES SEE IT THAT WAY. I DON'T THINK ANY SIDE FIGHTS FOR WHAT THEY THINK IS WRONG. I THINK IT'S JUST A CLASH OF DIFFERENCES...
WHY CLASH, THEN?
...
I THINK WHEN IDEAS ENTER INTO COMPETITION, THEY HAVE TO RESOLVE DOMINANCE. I GUESS THE ONLY TRUELY "BAD" IDEA IS ONE THAT TAKES AWAY SELF DETERMINATION.
THAT'S A PRETTY STARTLING CONCLUSION FROM SUCH A YOUNG MAN, FISK. VERY INTERESTING.

MOM SAID YOU KNEW MY DAD DURING THE WAR.
THAT'S RIGHT. I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF HIM IF YOU KNEW HIM. IT REALLY TORE ME UP WHEN HE DIED.
WHAT WAS HE LIKE?
DEDICATED AND RELIABLE. HE WAS WILLING TO DIE TO GIVE YOU THE BEST LIFE POSSIBLE, EVEN IF HE WOULD NEVER LAY EYES ON YOU.
WAS IT WORTH IT?
WHAT'S THAT?
VIETNAM.
...
I'VE BEEN ALL OVER THE WORLD AND I'VE SEEN A LOT OF STRIFE. I SEE HOW PEOPLE LIVE IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND SO DID YOUR FATHER. OUTSIDE OF THE AMERICAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, WHEREVER WE RETREAT, WHEREVER WE DON'T EXTEND OUR PROTECTION, I'VE SEEN PEOPLE SUFFER. I LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE, HERE, WITH A NICE HOUSE, WARM SHEETS, PLENTY OF FOOD, NO FEAR OF SOCIETY CRUMBLING AROUND YOUR EARS. YOU HAVE A MOTHER AND A SISTER WHO LOVE YOU DEARLY, A FAMILY THAT SOME WOULD LOVE TO BE A PART OF. YOUR FATHER DIED TO SECURE THIS FOR YOU, FISK. IF HE HADN'T, SOMEONE ELSE'S FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD TO...

THE COLD WAR IS AN ELABORATE GAME OF CHESS. WE FIGHT OVER IMPORTANT SQUARES, AND FOR DOMINANCE OVER SQUARES WE DON'T OCCUPY. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST CASTLE YOUR KING WHILE YOUR ENEMIES MASS AGAINST YOU. WE FIGHT TO HOLD THEM, DISRUPT THEM, AND BLEED THEM OF RESOURCES IN THE HOPES THAT SOMEDAY YOU, OR YOUR CHILDREN, WILL NOT HAVE TO FACE THE THREAT OF COMMUNIST HEGEMONY.
SO, WAS VIETNAM WORTH IT?
WE LEARNED A LOT FROM THAT CONFLICT. WE'VE LEARNED THINGS THAT WILL ENSURE THEY'LL PAY DEARLY FOR THEIR VICTORY THERE. ONLY THE FUTURE WILL SHOW THE RESULTS OF OUR RESOLVE.
HOPEFULLY, IN THE END, WE'LL BE THE ONES SAYING...
"CHECKMATE"!
TOK
DANG!
THAT WAS A GOOD GAME, FISK. YOU'LL MAKE A GOOD CHESS PLAYER, SOME DAY.
END

SPRAYBERR
HIGH SCHOO
NURSE
HAVE A SEAT, LUCY. YOUR MOTHER SHOULD BE HERE ANY MOMENT.
OKAY.


ENTER: THE TED
CLACK
STRONG NECK
TEENAGE MAN-WAVES
MANLY-BOY ARMS AND CHEST
SCULPTED HIPS
MAGNIFICENT BUTT!
HEY, NURSE. I SPRAINED MY WRIST WRESTLING DOWN A WILD BOAR THAT WANDERED ONTO THE FOOTBALL FIELD DURING PRACTICE. COACH SENT ME HERE TO GET A BRACE.
OH-KAY! SIT DOWN!
!

READY TO GO, LUCY?
I GUESS.
WHO WAS THAT WOMAN?
SIT DOWN!

IS THIS HER FIRST EXAM?
YES.
HAVE A SEAT AND WE'LL CALL YOU IN A MOMENT.
WHAT'S THIS DOCTOR LIKE?
CALM AND NICE. PLUS, SHE'S A WOMAN, WHICH SHOULD BE LESS CREEPY FOR YOU.
COME ON BACK, LUCY. WE'RE READY.
GLUG GLUG
LAP LAP

WHY AM I GOING ON THE PILL? I'M NOT HAVING SEX.
I WANT YOU TO GET USED TO THE ROUTINE, NOW.
THIS IS EMBARASSING.
MY SISTER HAD A SCARE WHEN I WAS GROWING UP. NOW, THAT'S EMBARASSING.
YOU SEE, LITTLE BOYS SPREAD STRESS AND MISERY, WHILE LITTLE GIRLS GATHER IT FROM FAR AND WIDE AND BRING IT RIGHT HOME.
WE'RE NOT KILLING UNBORN KITTENS IN THIS FAMILY, AND I DON'T WANT GRANDKITTENS UNTIL I'M AT LEAST FORTY-FIVE.
AREN'T THESE KIND OF LIKE GIVING ME PERMISSION TO HAVE SEX?
WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU ASKED FOR MY PERMISSION TO DO SOMETHING STUPID?
OH.

HEY, FANG. YOU KNOW LUCY BLACK?
YEAH.
I'VE GOT A PLAN. I'M GOING TO ASK HER OUT THIS FRIDAY.
BUT ISN'T SHE A FRESHMAN?
YES, BUT DID YOU SEE HER MOTHER? HOLY SHIT!
SHE'S PERFECT! A PORCELAIN WHITE GODDESS WITH AN ASS TO DIE FOR!
DON'T GET SO CLOSE WITHOUT PANTS.
YOU'RE GOING TO GO OUT WITH A GIRL TO GET AT HER MOTHER? SHE'S A GROWN WOMAN, DUDE.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND WOMEN, FANG. FORBIDDEN ROMANCE IS BIG WITH THEM. I THINK IF I PLAY THINGS RIGHT, I HAVE A CHANCE.

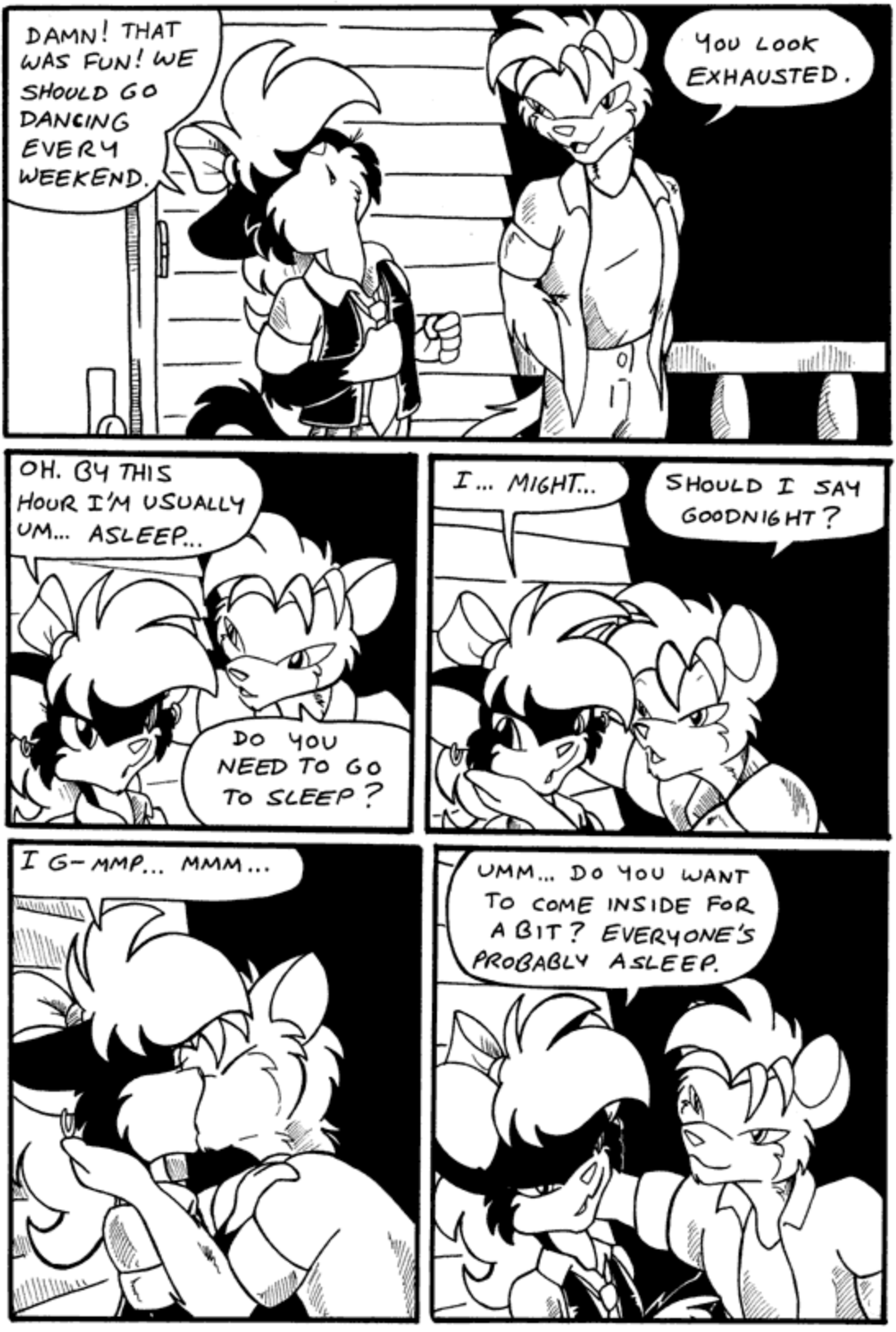
BRRIIING!
HELLO?
HELLO. IS LUCY AVAILABLE?
SHE'S IN THE SHOWER RIGHT NOW.
AH. WELL, COULD YOU TELL HER TED STEPHENS CALLED.
YOU SOUND CLOSE TO RAY STEVENS. ARE YOU RELATED?
NO, DUDE. JUST TELL HER—
YOU CALLED, RIGHT, RAY STEVENS. SHOULD SHE CALL YOU BACK?
SURE, LET ME GIVE YOU MY NUMBER...
WAIT... DID YOU SAY I WAS RAY STEVENS?
NO, TED STEPHENS. WITH A "V"?
NO NO. A "PH"... WAIT, WHAT'S IT MATTER?
NEVERMIND. JUST LET ME HAVE YOUR NUMBER, RAY, AND I'LL GIVE IT TO HER WHEN SHE GETS OUT.
DUDE...

ONLY WHEN I'M DANCIN' CAN I FEEL THIS FREEEE
WIGGLE
SHAKE
SLIIIIIIIDE
BUMP!
AT NIGHT I LOCK THE DOORS, WHERE NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE-EE
I'M TIRED OF DANCIN' HERE ALL BY MY SE-ELF
CLICK
BUMP!
TO-NIGHT I WANNA DANCE WITH SOME-ONE-ELSE
YEEEK!
FISK! DON'T YOU KNOCK!?
YEAH, I DID.

LET ME GET MY BRITCHES ON!
TED STEPHENS CALLED.
UFF!
TED!? WHEN!?
WHEN YOU WERE IN THE SHOWER.
TED? THE MOST GORGEOUS CAT IN SCHOOL TED?
JUST CALL HIM, OKAY. I PUT HIS NUMBER NEXT TO THE PHONE.
I CAN'T JUST CALL HIM... I'LL LOOK DESPERATE.

DINNER'S ALMOST READY! IT'S FRIED CHICKEN!
OH! I'M GOING OUT, TONIGHT.
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME. DO YOU NEED A RIDE?
NO. HE HAS A CAR.
WHAT? WHO HAS A CAR?
A GUY FROM SCHOOL...
OW!
WHOOOOOO?

SORRY IT TOOK A WHILE. MY MOTHER WAS SPAZZING A LITTLE.
OH?
BECAUSE YOU'RE SIXTEEN. SHE'S GOT THIS WHOLE PARANOID OUTLOOK ABOUT ME.
FFT. MY BROTHER COULD GO OUT WITH A GAY MONKEY AND SHE WOULDN'T CARE.
SHE USED TO DATE GUYS ALL THE TIME WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER.
OH HO! REALLY?


DAMN! THAT WAS FUN! WE SHOULD GO DANCING EVERY WEEKEND.
YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED.
OH. BY THIS HOUR I'M USUALLY UM... ASLEEP...
DO YOU NEED TO GO TO SLEEP?
I... MIGHT...
SHOULD I SAY GOODNIGHT?
I G-MMP... MMM...
UMM... DO YOU WANT TO COME INSIDE FOR A BIT? EVERYONE'S PROBABLY ASLEEP.

zzZZzz...
MMMM HMM-MM
CLICK!

SQUEAK!
CLIK!
BLINK
!
SHHHH
HHHHH
HMM-
MMM
SHHHHHHHHHHH
SQUEAK!

ZZMMZZ...
OOOOOOO... MROWWWL... MM ...OHHH, TED...
PINCH
PINCH PINCH
OH YEAH, BABY. TAKE THAT PERKY BUTT INTO THE KITCHEN AND FIX ME A HAM SANDWICH.
AAAGH!
F*CK!
SHIT! FUCK! WHAT?

IT'S NOT FUNNY, YOU LITTLE ASSHOLE!
THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE WAS!
TED! SORRY! I FELL ASLEEP.
OH, IT'S OKAY. I WAS UPSTAIRS LOOKING FOR THE BATHROOM.
HEE...
WHEW...
FISK WAS JUST BEING A JUVENILE DICK.
FISK'S GOING TO BED.

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT, FANG.
MMM.
LUCY'S GOING TO A SLUMBER PARTY TONIGHT. HER BROTHER'S SPENDING THE NIGHT WITH HIS FRIENDS...
SHEILA BLACK WILL BE ALL ALONE WHEN I SHOW UP TO LAY ON THE BOYISH CHARM.
HOW DO I LOOK?
HOMOSEXUAL.
OH, FUCK YOU. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WOMEN, ANYWAY.

AHHH...
DING DONG
CLINK
WHO IN THE-
OH! OH MY...
HEE!

OH DEAR! TED!
DON'T YOU JUST LOOK CHARMING!
BUT LUCY'S OVER AT ELIZABETH'S HOUSE, TONIGHT. SHE'S JUST TWO HOUSES DOWN IF YOU WANT TO IMPRESS HER.
OH I SEE. MISS BLACK, IT'S NOT EASY FOR ME TO TELL YOU HOW GRATEFUL I AM FOR YOU ALLOWING LUCY TO GO OUT WITH ME.
YOU'RE AN AWESOME, STRONG WOMAN AND I THINK LUCY IS LUCKY TO HAVE YOU AS A MOTHER.
I THINK YOU DESERVE THESE, SHEILA.
OH!
SO, I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW MY APPRECIATION BY TREATING YOU TO DINNER, SOMETIME.

MMM.
DINNER WITH LUCY AND I? THAT'S AN AMAZING GESTURE, TED.
I... HAD MY HEART ON SPEAKING WITH YOU OVER DINNER... ALONE PERHAPS.
ALONE? IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT ON YOUR MIND, TED?
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE YOUNG AND UNSURE... IT'S HARD TO EXPRESS HOW I FEEL...
TED... ARE YOU ASKING ME OUT ON A DATE?
OH!
OH, YEAH.

TED, YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BE A BAD MOTHER. I RAISED LUCY AGAINST A LOT OF TOUGH ODDS. I BUILT A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER AND SHE TRUSTS ME AS SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN THROUGH LIFE AHEAD OF HER AND IS LOOKING OUT FOR HER...
YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BETRAY HER FOR A DATE WITH HER BOYFRIEND AND A CHANCE AT SOME SIXTEEN YEAR OLD PIECE OF DICK!?
W—
...YEAH?
GET OFF MY PROPERTY!

WHAT THE HELL!? HOW COULD YOU DO S-SOMETHING SO SICK AND SLIMY!!? JESUS T-TED!
CHRIST, I DON'T NEED ALL THIS EMOTIONAL BULLSHIT, RIGHT NOW!
YOU THINK I'M AFRAID OF YOU GETTING UPSET!?
FRESHMAN BITCHES LIKE YOU ARE A DIME PER DOZEN. NOW GET OFF MY CASE.
!
END

SOB!
YEESH.
WIMPER...
...
SOBBB!
CHOKE
THUMP
THUMP

LUCY?
WHAT?
YOU SOUNDED TERRIBLE.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SOUND, FISK?
WELL, AT LEAST YOU ONLY WENT OUT ON ONE DATE...
THAT'S NOT THE POINT! HE MADE ME FEEL LIKE A NOBODY! LIKE I WAS N-NOTHING BUT A WORTHLESS FLECK OF SHIT TO BE FLICKED ASIDE!
HAS ANYBODY EVER MADE YOU FEEL LIKE THAT!?

I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE OUT WITH HIM! SICK JOCK FUCKER... HOW CAN A GUY BE THAT WAY...
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT. I'M JUST A DIME PER DOZEN. ANOTHER STUPID GIRL WHO'LL DO ANYTHING.
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER DUMB GIRL. I ONLY HAVE ONE TWIN, YOU KNOW.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
WHAT I MEAN IS NO ONE EXPECTS YOU TO BE PERFECT OR HAVE FLAWLESS JUDGEMENT. BUT YOU'RE NOT JUST ANY GIRL. YOU'RE MY SISTER, AND I THINK I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN SOME FUCKING JOCK.
I HATE TO SEE YOU LIKE THIS. EVER SINCE YOU ALMOST DIED WHEN WE WERE NINE I'VE FELT MORE LIKE YOUR OLDER BROTHER THAN YOUR TWIN.
I THINK TED KNOWS HOW BADLY HE HURT YOU, BUT SOMETIMES OUR PRIDE IS TOUGHER THAN OUR SENSE OF HONOR. YOU'LL GET OVER ALL THIS IN TIME AND YOU'LL BE A BETTER JUDGE OF OTHERS AS A RESULT.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP YOU FEEL BETTER UNTIL THEN, THOUGH.
YOU WILL?
WILL YOU GO SHOPPING WITH ME, TOMMOROW?

HOW DOES THE MALL HELP?
MALLS ARE MAGICAL. THEY'RE BIG BUFFETS OF SHOPPING THERAPY.
WOULDN'T YOU RATHER GO SHOPPING WITH ELIZABETH?
NO. SHE'S NOT A GUY.
I NEED A NEW SET OF OUTFITS. NOTHING'S MORE HEALING THAN FEELING BEAUTIFUL AND WANTED. YOU'RE A GUY, SO YOU KNOW WHAT GUYS LIKE. I NEED YOUR INPUT.
I LOVE ELIZABETH AS A DEAR FRIEND, BUT HER CHOICE IN CLOTHING IS JUST... WELL... SO NOT ME.
GUYS LOVE GIRLS WHO PLAY ARCADE GAMES.
COME ON...

THIS IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO START.
NO, I'M NOT A 'PROSTITUTE' Boutique
OUTSTANDING.
YOU CAN TELL THESE ARE QUALITY CLOTHES BY THE PRICES.
THIS ONE HAS RIPS IN IT. IF I WORE IT, YOU COULD SEE MY BRA.
DO YOU THINK A BLACK BRA WOULD LOOK BETTER UNDER IT? BECAUSE IF SO I'D HAVE TO BUY ONE. FISK?
OH CHRIST, FISK.

HOW'S THIS?
COACH
CUTE.
MAYBE THIS IS TOO SLUTTY.
TRYING TOO HARD.
RAR?
WORDS FAIL ME.
I THINK YOU SHOULD WEAR THE OTHER ONE.
WHAT OTHER ONE?
YOU KNOW THE ONE.
NO.
WEAR IT.
FIIIIISK...
YOU'RE SUCH A PERV.
OH YES. PUT ON THAT POUTY FACE.
JUST LIKE THAT.

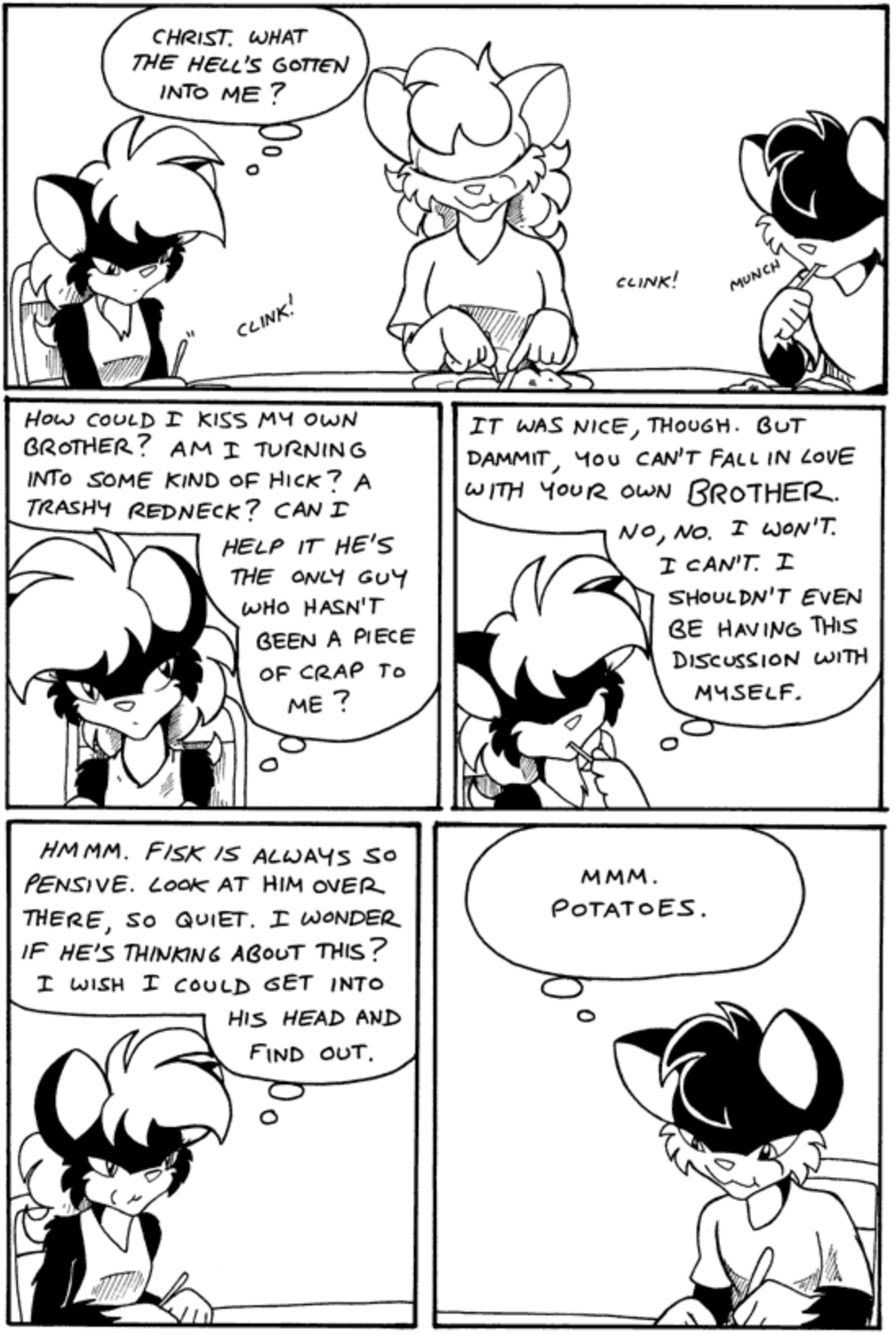
HOW'D YOU AFFORD ALL THAT ON YOUR ALLOWANCE?
WELL, FISK HELPED A LITTLE. HE THOUGHT I NEEDED IT MORE THAN HE DID.
AWWW! WHAT A LITTLE HERO!
YEAH.
WHAT... IS THIS?
UM. THONG UNDERWEAR.
SO PEOPLE DON'T SEE PANTY LINES ON MY BUTT WHEN I WEAR TIGHT SKIRTS.
TIGHT SKIRTS!?

FISK DID THAT?! WHAT AN AWESOME BROTHER!
I GUESS.
WE CAN'T EVEN GET MY BROTHER TO DO THE DISHES WHEN IT'S HIS TURN.
YOUR BROTHER'S SUCH A SWEET GUY!
IT'S TOO BAD HE'S NOT A MOUSE.
YEAH. THAT'S TOO BAD.

FISK. DO YOU EVER MISS BEING WITH ELIZABETH?
MM? OF COURSE I DO.
CLICK CLICKITY
WHY HAVEN'T YOU PURSUED ANOTHER GIRLFRIEND?
CLICK
I DON'T FEEL LIKE I FIT IN WITH ANYBODY. THINGS ARE JUST UNCOMFORTABLE. I DON'T WANT TO PLAY THE "IMPRESS ME" GAME, OR COMPETE WITH GUYS WHO LOOK LIKE TED.
EVERY-THING I TRY TO PURSUE FALLS APART. I GUESS I'M JUST TIRED OF IT.
I COULD HOOK YOU UP WITH SOMEONE WHO SEEMS NICE.
LUCY, I DON'T TRUST ANYONE WHO JUST SEEMS NICE.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO EVER BE HAPPY IF YOU DON'T TRUST ANYONE?
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN...
YOU TRUST ME AT LEAST, RIGHT?
OF COURSE I TRUST MY SISTER.

I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID THAT...
IT'S OKAY.
IT'S JUST-
KIDS! DINNER'S READY!


CHRIST. WHAT THE HELL'S GOTTEN INTO ME?
CLINK!
CLINK!
MUNCH
HOW COULD I KISS MY OWN BROTHER? AM I TURNING INTO SOME KIND OF HICK? A TRASHY REDNECK? CAN I HELP IT HE'S THE ONLY GUY WHO HASN'T BEEN A PIECE OF CRAP TO ME?
IT WAS NICE, THOUGH. BUT DAMMIT, YOU CAN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR OWN BROTHER.
NO, NO. I WON'T. I CAN'T. I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HAVING THIS DISCUSSION WITH MYSELF.
HMMM. FISK IS ALWAYS SO PENSIVE. LOOK AT HIM OVER THERE, SO QUIET. I WONDER IF HE'S THINKING ABOUT THIS? I WISH I COULD GET INTO HIS HEAD AND FIND OUT.
MMM. POTATOES.

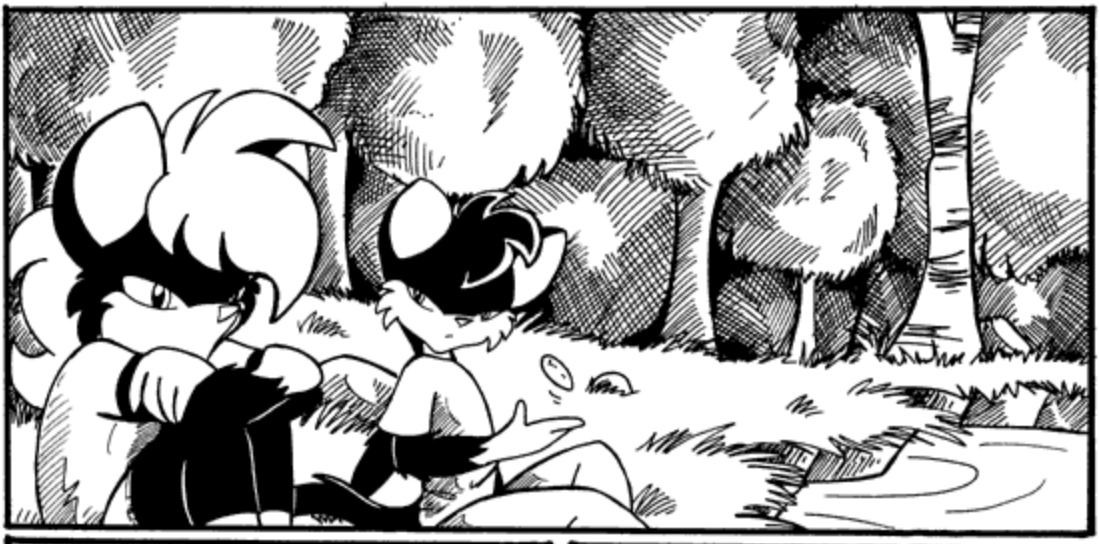
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M STILL THINKING ABOUT TED.
AT LEAST TOMMOROW'S SUNDAY. SO WHO CARES IF I CAN'T SLEEP.
I NEED SOMEONE TO HOLD. HOW AM I EVER GOING TO TRUST ANOTHER GUY FOR THAT THOUGH...
MAYBE I CAN GO TALK TO FISK, AGAIN. HE'S PROBABLY TRYING TO SLEEP.
I'VE BEEN TAKING A LOT OF HIS TIME, THOUGH. I HATE TO IMPOSE SO MUCH.

GO AHEAD. SLIP OFF TO FISK'S ROOM. YOU KNOW HOW THAT TURNED OUT THE LAST TIME.
THAT'S NOT WHY SHE WANTS TO GO! LUCY JUST NEEDS TO KNOW SOMEONE CARES!
SHE'S THOUGHT ABOUT IT! NO DENYING!
SO WILL A HEADACHE BUT WE STILL TAKE ASPIRIN!
LIVE A LITTLE!
SHE'S STILL IN PAIN! THOSE THOUGHTS WILL FADE.
MAKING OUT IS WAY DIFFERENT FROM ASPIRIN!
NOT WITH HER BROTHER!
POOF!
WHAT WILL BE IS WHAT SHE WILL KNOW HAS BEEN DONE.
WHAT?
SHAH..
COP OUT.

CLIK!
CLIK
I WAS LONELY.
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE.

TWEET
BLINK
ZZMMZZM
S
!
ZZMMZZRRWW.
?
GASP
GZZZZZM

NNF...?
SCOOTCH
SNUG
GOOD MORNING.
OH!
MMM...
NUZ
I'M GOING BACK TO MY ROOM BEFORE MOM WAKES UP.

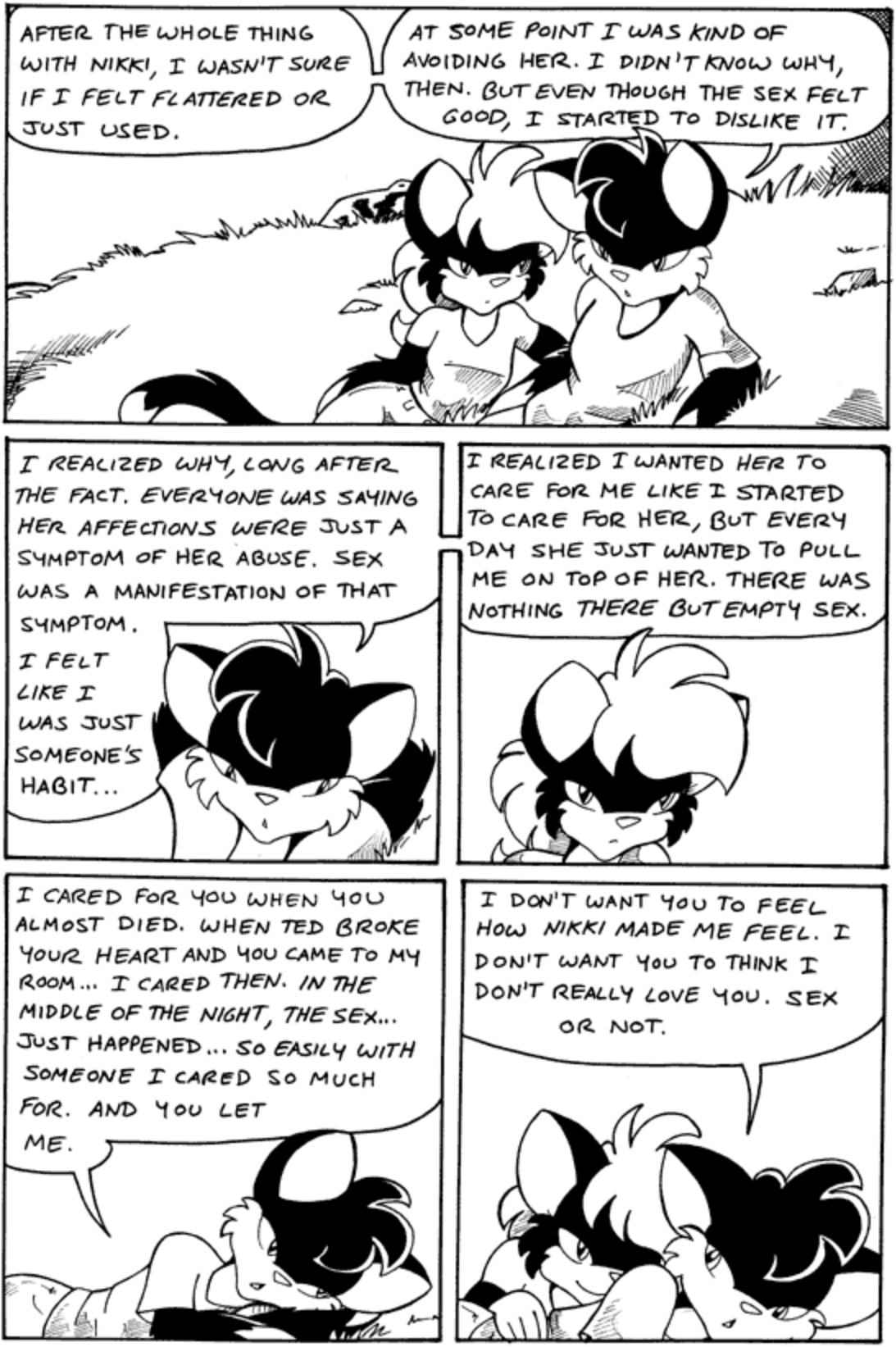


THAT WAS WRONG, HUH?

WRONG BY US?
SWING

I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS IT FEELS THAT WAY. WE DID SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE TO KEEP A SECRET.

WHAT KIND OF FEELINGS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME? EVEN IF I WASN'T YOUR SISTER?


AFTER THE WHOLE THING WITH NIKKI, I WASN'T SURE IF I FELT FLATTERED OR JUST USED.
AT SOME POINT I WAS KIND OF AVOIDING HER. I DIDN'T KNOW WHY, THEN. BUT EVEN THOUGH THE SEX FELT GOOD, I STARTED TO DISLIKE IT.
I REALIZED WHY, LONG AFTER THE FACT. EVERYONE WAS SAYING HER AFFECTIONS WERE JUST A SYMPTOM OF HER ABUSE. SEX WAS A MANIFESTATION OF THAT SYMPTOM.
I FELT LIKE I WAS JUST SOMEONE'S HABIT...
I REALIZED I WANTED HER TO CARE FOR ME LIKE I STARTED TO CARE FOR HER, BUT EVERY DAY SHE JUST WANTED TO PULL ME ON TOP OF HER. THERE WAS NOTHING THERE BUT EMPTY SEX.
I CARED FOR YOU WHEN YOU ALMOST DIED. WHEN TED BROKE YOUR HEART AND YOU CAME TO MY ROOM... I CARED THEN. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, THE SEX... JUST HAPPENED... SO EASILY WITH SOMEONE I CARED SO MUCH FOR. AND YOU LET ME.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL HOW NIKKI MADE ME FEEL. I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK I DON'T REALLY LOVE YOU. SEX OR NOT.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, FISK. THIS IS OUR LAST SESSION UNLESS THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE GOING ON YOU'D LIKE TO DISCUSS.
NO. I GUESS I'M FINE. THANK YOU MRS. HOLLINGS.
THE END

WUM
WUM WUM
WUM
WUM
WUM
OFF BALLANCE!
BAM
BAM
BAM
!
FEDERAL EXPRESS
SQUIRRRRP...
BRAWNY PAPER TOWELS... FOR THOSE EXTRA SLOPPY WET MESSES THAT NEED BRAWNY'S MANLY TOUCH...
OH YEAH, USE HIM LIKE A CHEAP RAG YOU FILTHY WHORE.
BLUE BELL

MMM.
GNARMM.
MUNCH
MOM. MY FAVORITE SHIRT HAS A RIP IN THE HE-
CHRIST BOY! GO PUT ON YOUR DAMNED SHIRT! THIS IS A HOUSEHOLD, NOT A BROTHEL!
DON'T GO DOWNSTAIRS. I THINK AUNT FLOW IS IN TOWN.

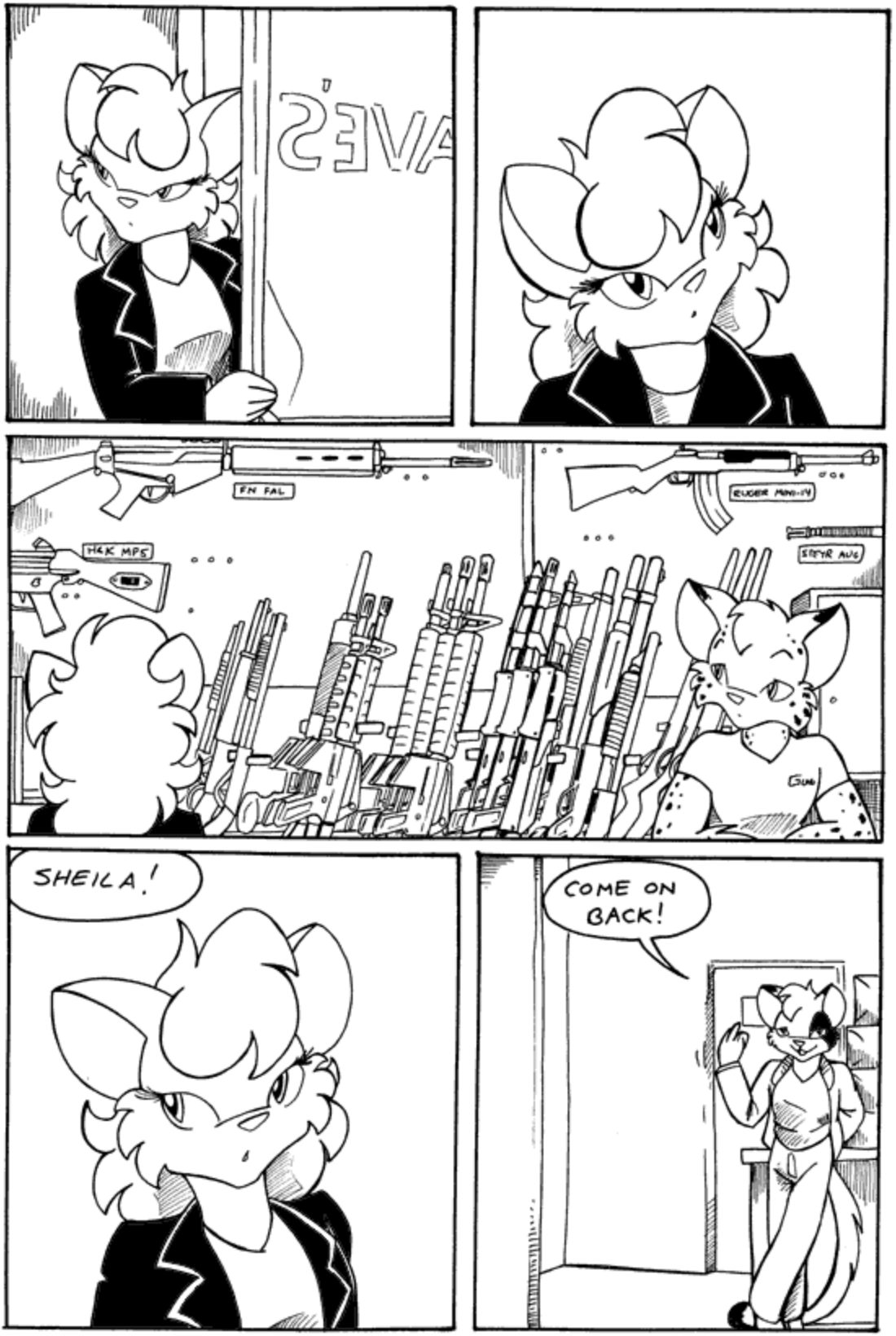
I THINK I'M LOSING MY MIND, KELLY.
OH?
I'M SO TENSE. I YELLED AT FISK YESTERDAY, FOR HARDLY ANY REASON.
YOU SPEND ALL DAY IN THAT HOUSE, LATELY. I KNOW I'D GET A BAD CASE OF CABIN FEVER.
MAYBE YOU NEED A VACATION?
OR A MAN.
OH! SINCE YOU PUT IT THAT WAY! HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN, DEAR?
SINCE HARVE...
OH MY GOD!

ARE YOU NERVOUS ABOUT DATING AGAIN?
SORT OF. I GUESS I'M AFRAID THE INVESTMENT WON'T YEILD A GOOD RETURN, YOU KNOW?
I'M NOT YOUNG ANYMORE. EVERY YEAR IT GETS A LITTLE HARDER TO STAY IN SHAPE. I CAN'T WASTE TIME FROM MAN TO MAN.
AND WHAT IF ONE OF THEM TURNS OUT TO BE... YOU KNOW...
A CREEP.
I KNOW A FEW TRUSTWORTHY BACHELORS. LETS GET YOU HOOKED UP!
OH...

IF YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT THE "CREEPS" YOU CAN LOOK INTO SELF DEFENSE COURSES, MARTIAL ARTS, MAYBE A GUN FOR THE HOME...
WHO'S GOING TO TRAIN SOME HOMEBOUND MOTHER?
WHY DON'T YOU ASK SAM?
SAM?
SAMUEL TOBS, YOUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR? HE TRAINS COBB COUNTY POLICE.
HE'S GOOD FRIENDS WITH MY HUSBAND AND THEY'VE BOTH TAUGHT ME A FEW THINGS. FISK AND HIS SON ARE ALWAYS HANGING OUT TOGETHER. I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT MORE FAMILIAR WITH THEM.
I DON'T KNOW. HIS WIFE GIVES ME A BAD VIBE WHEN I'M NEAR BY, AND THEY'RE ALWAYS FIGHTING.
TRUE. SHE DOES HAVE A CERTAIN "SHREWY" QUALITY.

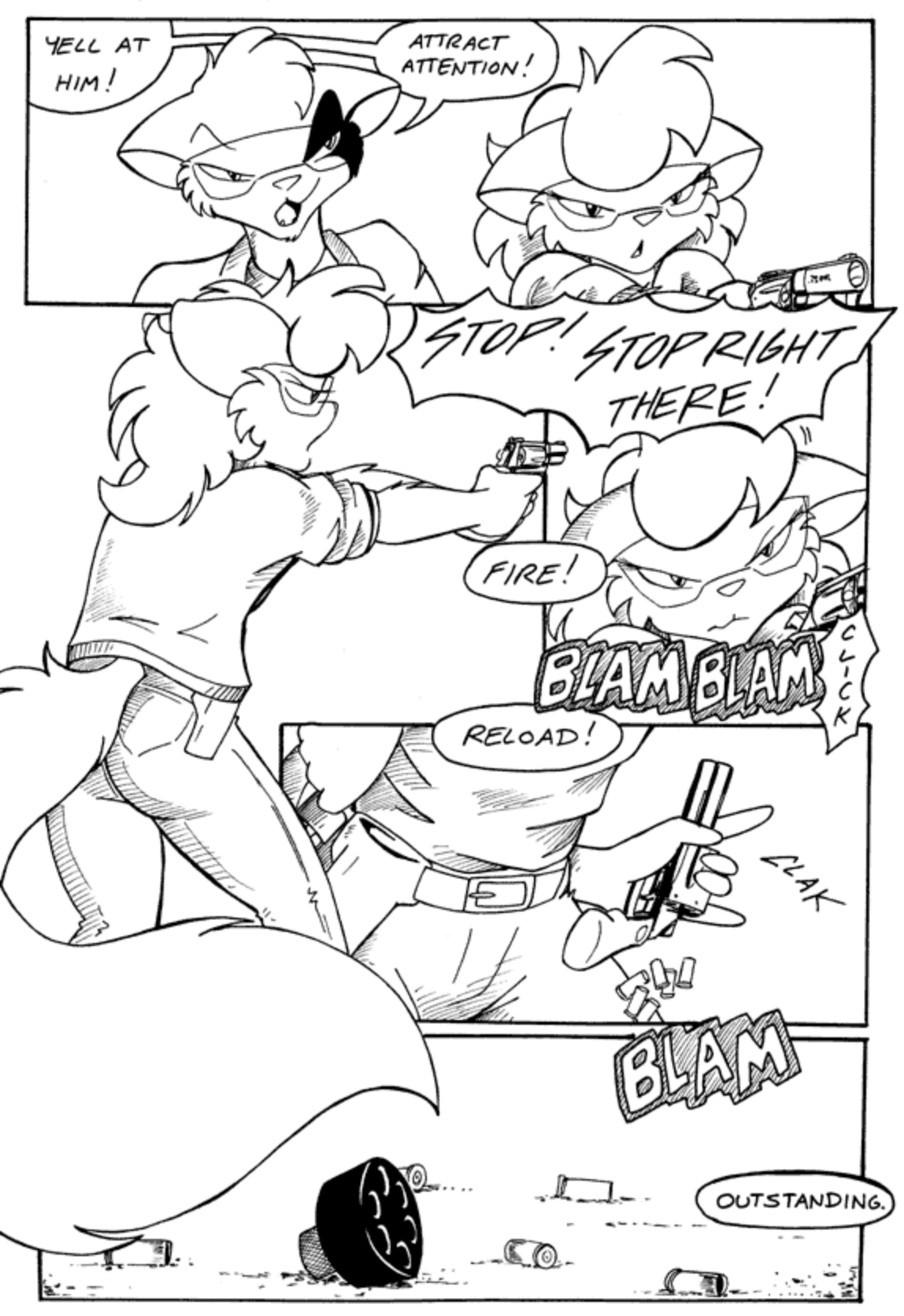
HEY BOYS.
HEY DAD. CAN I HAVE SOME DOUGH SO I CAN HIT THE ARCADE THIS AFTER-NOON?
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW YOUR MOTHER FEELS ABOUT THOSE VIOLENT GAMES, RYAN.
YEAH. I KNOW.
HERE'S A TWENTY. TELL HER YOU WENT TO THE MALL OR SOMETHING.
AWESOME. THANKS, DAD.

GOOD MORNING, SAM.
RAKE RAKE
OH, GOOD MORNING, SHEILA.
UM... HI.
SWISH
KELLY TELLS ME YOU GIVE PERSONAL SELF DEFENSE AND FIREARM INSTRUCTION AS A SIDE BUSINESS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WELL, THAT'S A BIG RESPONSIBILITY. IT'S NOT SOMETHING TO TAKE LIGHTLY...
... BUT... WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS THE BEST PLACE TO TALK IT OVER. I'LL BE AT DAVE'S GUNROOM AFTER 3 TOMMOROW IF YOU'RE STILL SERIOUS.


AVE'S
FN FAL
RUGER MINI-14
H&K MP5
STEYR AUG
SHEILA!
COME ON BACK!

I SUPPOSE THE FIRST THING I SHOULD ASK IS WHY YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THIS?
WELL...
FIVE YEARS AGO... I WAS RAPED. IT WAS IN MY OWN HOUSE. MY SON WOKE UP AND STOPPED IT WITH A BAT...
I DON'T EVER WANT TO FEEL THAT HELPLESS AGAIN.
I'M SORRY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. BUT I HAVEN'T DATED SINCE. AND...
... I REALIZE I HAVE A SECURITY AND A TRUST CONCERN.
IF YOU WERE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION AGAIN, COULD YOU BRING YOURSELF TO USE DEADLY FORCE?
I DON'T THINK I'D HAVE A PROBLEM.

JUST LIKE WE PRACTICED.
JUST KEEP YOUR SIGHTS LINED UP ON THE TARGET AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THE TRIGGER.
DON'T ANTICIPATE THE SHOT AND JUST STAY FOCUSED ON THOSE SIGHTS...
BLAM!
PIFF!
GOOD. GO AHEAD AND SHOOT OUT THE REST OF THE CHAMBERS.

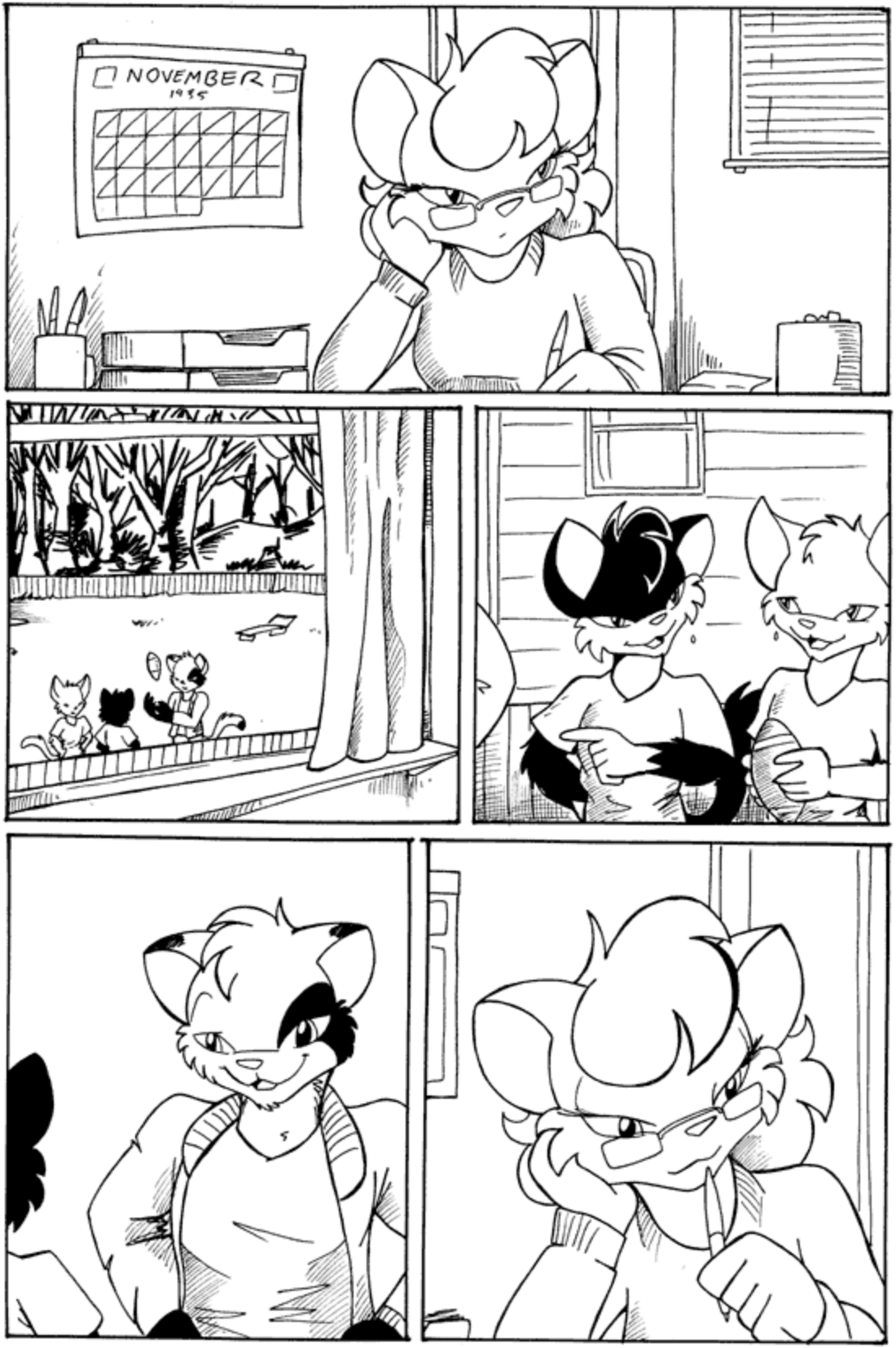

YELL AT HIM!
ATTRACT ATTENTION!
STOP! STOP RIGHT THERE!
FIRE!
BLAM BLAM
CLICK
RELOAD!
CLAK
BLAM
OUTSTANDING.

THAT'S GOOD. COLLECT YOUR TARGET AND TAKE A BREAK.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
YOUR GUNBAG IS BEEPING.
YEAH? OH HI, HONEY.
POP!
MMHM. YEAH. ABOUT SEVEN, TONIGHT.
I'M WITH A CLIENT. UH HUH, SHOOTING.
WHAT'S IT MATTER?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!

YES. I'M AT THE RANGE. YES, I'M GETTING PAID.
NO.
NO! I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION!
OH, I LOVE THE COUCH! IT'S QUIETER AND WARMER!
SHIT!
CLACK!
ZIIIIIIP!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'LL LIVE.
NEXT WEEK WE'LL BE AT THE GYM. I'LL GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS.

YOUR DINNER'S IN THE FRIDGE. RYAN AND I ALREADY ATE.
OKAY. THANKS.

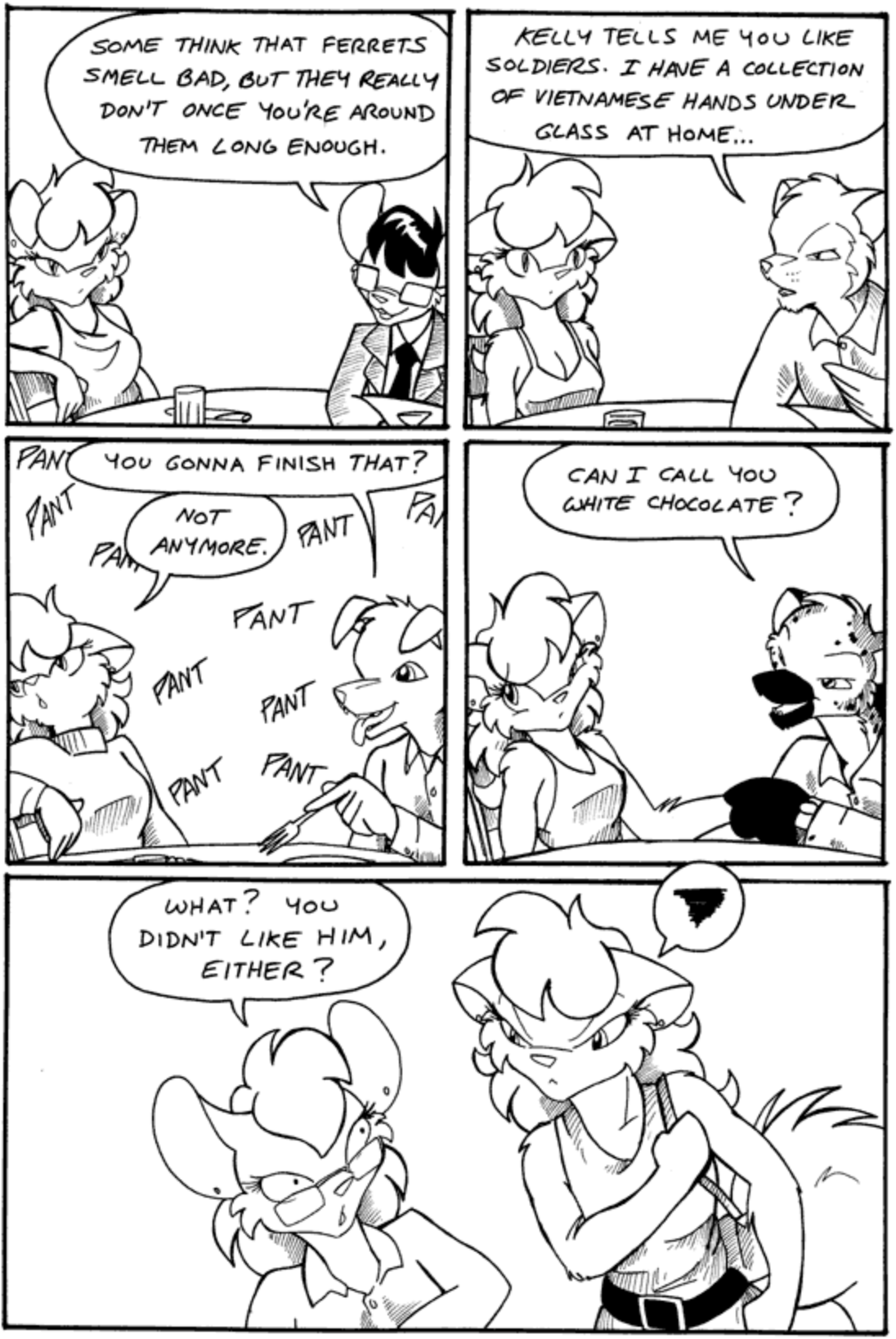
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
UFF!
INTERCEPTION! WOO!
BAH!


NOVEMBER
1995

HELLO MR. TOBS.
OH, HEY SHEILA.
CAN I HAVE MY SON BACK? HE NEEDS TO EAT DINNER.
YOU MAY WANT TO THROW HIM INTO THE SHOWER, FIRST.
WHAT ARE WE HAVING?
CHICKEN, RICE, COLLARDS, AND-
POTATOES?
MMHM.
GROWL!

SHEILA? YOO-HOOOO!?
BOO?
YEEEK!
OH GOD... YOU SCARED ME, SAM.
I MEAN KELLY!

SAM?
SHEILA!
ER...
NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT... I MEAN, I'VE JUST BEEN TRAINING SO MUCH, YOU KNOW?
SIP
THEN YOU'RE READY TO DATE! THAT'S GOOD BECAUSE I BROUGHT A LIST!
LIST?


SOME THINK THAT FERRETS SMELL BAD, BUT THEY REALLY DON'T ONCE YOU'RE AROUND THEM LONG ENOUGH.
KELLY TELLS ME YOU LIKE SOLDIERS. I HAVE A COLLECTION OF VIETNAMESE HANDS UNDER GLASS AT HOME...
PANT
YOU GONNA FINISH THAT?
NOT ANYMORE.
PANT
CAN I CALL YOU WHITE CHOCOLATE?
WHAT? YOU DIDN'T LIKE HIM, EITHER?

HMMM.

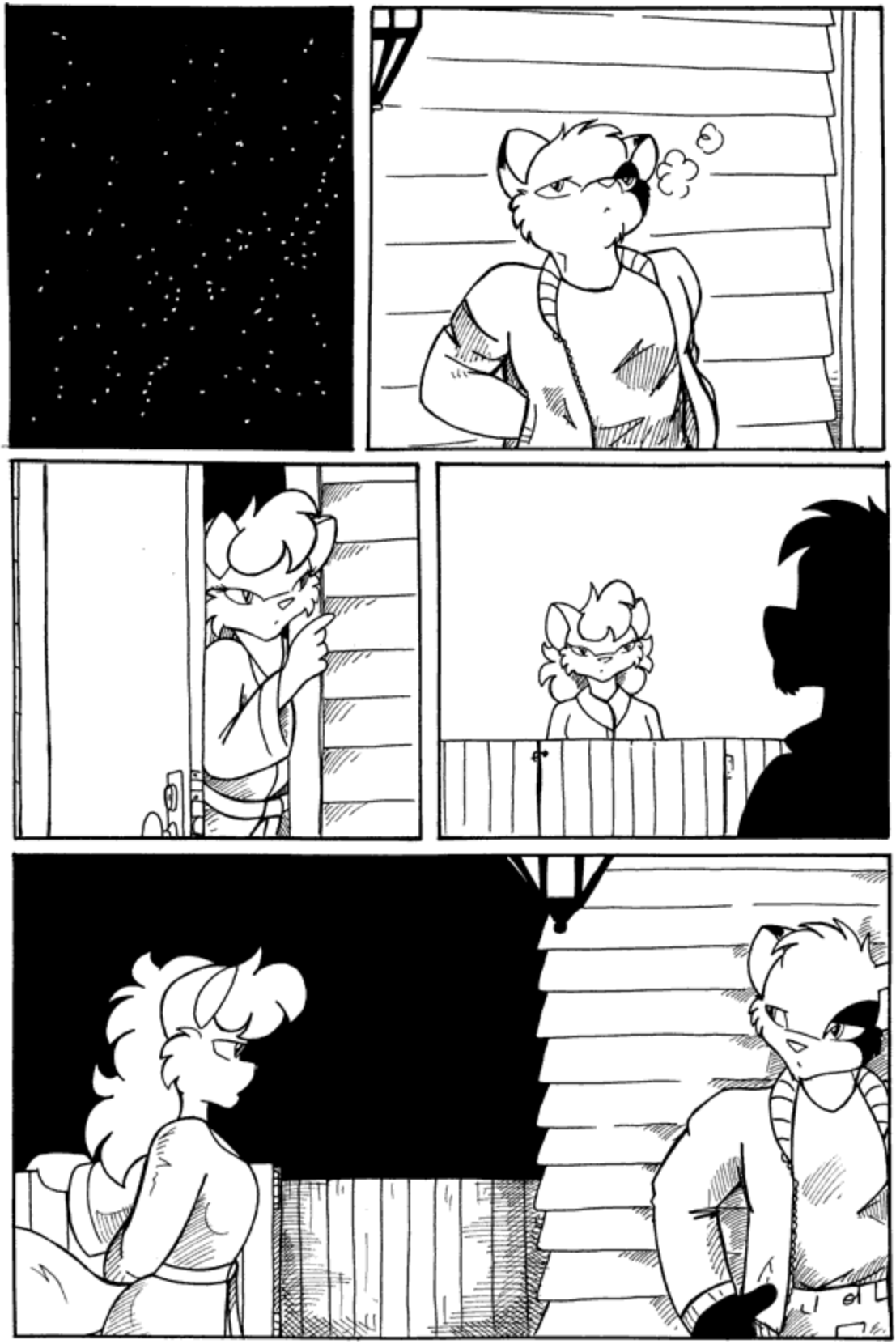
SAM? IT'S TWO IN THE MORNING. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HEY SHEILA. JUST HAVING A HARD TIME SLEEPING.
I HEARD YOU FIGHTING, TONIGHT.
YEAH, SORRY. IT'S BEEN A PRETTY BAD MONTH. IT'LL PROBABLY GET BETTER.
IT ALWAYS DOES. I JUST USUALLY NEED SOME TIME ALONE. TO THINK. TO CALM DOWN.
AS LONG AS I DON'T SAY OR DO ANYTHING RASH, IT'LL BE FINE.

THERE'S JUST SO MUCH THAT SETS HER OFF. I WALK ON EGG-SHELLS. SHE HATES MY JOB. SHE HATES MY HOURS.
WE DISAGREE ON HOW TO RAISE RYAN. SHE'S ACCUSED ME OF HAVING AFFAIRS.
BUT, WE HANG IN THERE FOR RYAN.
SHE'D KILL ME IF SHE KNEW I WAS UP AND TALKING TO YOU...
IN FACT, I SHOULD HEAD IN SOON, IN CASE SHE WAKES UP.
WELL, IF IT MATTERS TO YOU... I THINK YOU'RE A GOOD MAN AND A GOOD FATHER.

SKKK
I REALLY SHOULD GO. I'LL HAVE TO TALK TO YOU, LATER.

BLAM
BLAM
TIME?
YO! SAM!
OH, SHIT! SORRY JERRY. I SPACED...
BEEP!
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT, AGAIN.
YOU'VE BEEN SPACED ALL DAY. WHAT'S UP?

HOME TROUBLES?
CLUNK
I GUESS IT'S OBVIOUS. IT'S BEEN PRETTY BAD LATELY.
I'M GETTING TIRED OF IT, JERRY. IT'S GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE THE IRRATIONAL AND PARANOID DELUSIONS ARE THE NORM. I MISS THE AFFECTIONATE WOMAN I MARRIED.
I'M WONDERING IF THE SITUATION IS SALVAGEABLE.
WELL, WHATEVER YOU DO, KEEP RYAN IN MIND. YOUR KIDS ARE YOUR GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY. DON'T BLOW IT.



IT'S COLD OUT HERE.
SHEILA...
IF YOU NEED TO BE AWAY...
AT LEAST COME IN OUT OF THE COLD.

LUCY, I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
DOES IT INVOLVE KNEEING YOU IN THE BALLS?
CAN YOU SLIP THIS NOTE TO CINDY IN YOUR GYM CLASS, TOMMOROW?
OOO! DOES MY BROTHER HAVE A CRUSH?
YES.
CAN YOU AT LEAST PRETEND TO BE EMBARASSED? FOR MY SAKE!?

LUCY, WHAT'S YOUR BROTHER DOING WITH YOUR WAGON?

THAT LOOKS SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE A PILE OF FRESH FORESKINS.
OH. MY. GOD.

FISK! WHERE DID YOU GET... THOSE!?
COOL, HUH?
NO.
THEY'RE JUST SHREDDED PIG SKINS I GOT FROM THE BUTCHER SHOP. I HEARD JENNY'S DAD COMPLAINING ABOUT LAWYERS, SO I'M GOING TO TELL HIM THESE ARE THEIR FORESKINS.
THOSE STRAY DOGS SURE LOOK IMPRESSED.
AH! DAMN! QUICK! RUN HOME AND GET MY BB GUN!
BARK!
BARK
RRRRRRR
ROWF!
GRRRRR!

BRRRRING!
HMPH... LET IT RING...
I CAN'T. IT MIGHT BE MY KIDS...

HELLO? HI, LUCY!

WHAT!? DOG ATTACK!?
HOSPITAL?!!

RABIES!?

FISK'S HAD ALL HIS SHOTS AS A PRECAUTION, AND THE LAD'S GOING TO BE FINE.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR. THIS YOUNG MAN'S IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.
WHAT'D I DO!?
LUCY TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR LITTLE HAIRBRAINED STUNT WITH A WAGON FULL OF PORK. YOU RUINED A VERY NICE EVENING FOR YOUR MOTHER, AND DON'T YOU LAY YOUR EARS AT ME WHEN I'M TALKING!
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, THOSE WERE THE FORESKINS OF SLAIN LAWYERS. I WAS ON MY WAY TO IMPRESS JENNY'S DAD WITH THEM WHEN I WAS AMBUSHED.
I CAN WRITE YOU A REFERAL TO A GOOD CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST...
GOD, YOU PEOPLE...

FISK, HONEY, I'M GOING TO SPEND THE DAY WITH FRIENDS. THERE'S SEVERAL PHONE NUMBERS ON THE FRIDGE IF YOU NEED ME.
OKAY, MOM.
WHERE'S LUCY?
STILL ASLEEP.
MUNCH
SAVE HER SOME CEREAL, OKAY?
SHAKE SHAKE

HEY, LUCY! I ATE ALL THE CEREAL, BUT I GOT YOU A PEAR AND HALF A POP-TART AND...
WHOA. YOU LOOK ROUGH.
I FEEL SICK.
SICK!? YOU CAN'T BE SICK! MOM'S GOING TO BE GONE ALL DAY!
LUCKY FOR YOU, I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR WHEN I GROW UP!
YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME.
KER-SNAP!!

I BET I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT DISEASE YOU HAVE, OTHER THAN JUST GIRL GERMS.
MWEH.
I THINK YOU MAY HAVE SYPHILIS.
WHAT'S THAT?
WHOA... MAYBE NOT.
GIMME THAT!

GOT SOME ORANGE JUICE?
YEAH, MOM. I GOT IT.
GO TO MY MEDICINE CABINET AND YOU SHOULD FIND SOME STORE BRAND DECONGESTANT.
WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?
THEY'RE RED CAPSULES.
I'VE GOT SOME INSIDE A LITTLE ROUND CALENDAR.
NO, HONEY. PUT THOSE BACK.
OKAY, GOT SOME.
GIVE HER ONE AND LET HER SLEEP. THEY'LL MAKE HER DROWSY.
OKAY.
FUCK.

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KER-SNAP!!

I BET I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT DISEASE YOU HAVE, OTHER THAN JUST GIRL GERMS.
MWEH.
I THINK YOU MAY HAVE SYPHILIS.
WHAT'S THAT?
WHOA... MAYBE NOT.
GIMME THAT!

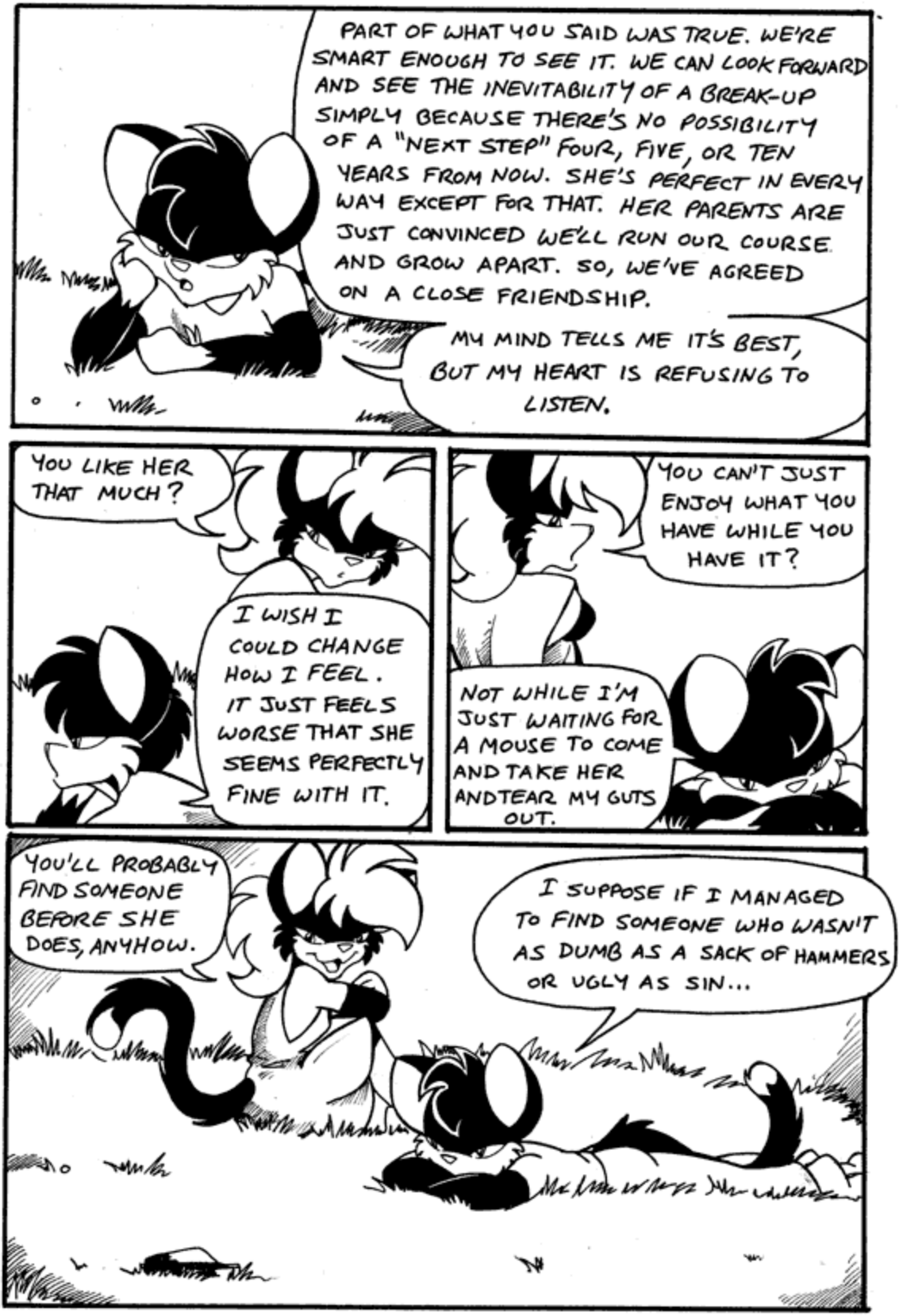
GOT SOME ORANGE JUICE?
YEAH, MOM. I GOT IT.
GO TO MY MEDICINE CABINET AND YOU SHOULD FIND SOME STORE BRAND DECONGESTANT.
WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?
THEY'RE RED CAPSULES.
I'VE GOT SOME INSIDE A LITTLE ROUND CALENDAR.
NO, HONEY. PUT THOSE BACK.
OKAY, GOT SOME.
GIVE HER ONE AND LET HER SLEEP. THEY'LL MAKE HER DROWSY.
OKAY.
FUCK.

I'M REALLY NOT GOOD WITH WORDS. I HAVE TO TRY AT LEAST... BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH. LUCY WANTED TO SET US UP, AND I GOT PRESSURED INTO IT.
BUT, THAT'S NOT ALL OF IT...
WHEN WE WERE TALKING IN THE HALLWAY, I REALIZED EVERYTHING I WAS SAYING WAS TRUE. MOST BOYS JUST LOOK FOR SOMETHING PRETTY. I GUESS I MAY HAVE GOTTEN BURNED OUT ON PURELY PHYSICAL GIRLS WHEN I WAS WITH NIKKI... I DIDN'T KNOW HOW NICE IT'D BE TO HAVE A GIRL AS A FRIEND.
I'M SORRY I LIED, INITIALLY. IF YOU WANT TO KEEP HATING ME, I'LL UNDERSTAND AND I'LL LET YOU BE. BUT, I HAVE TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I REALLY FELL FOR YOU... ... BEFORE I GO.

IS FISK JOINING US FOR DINNER, AGAIN?
I DIDN'T THINK SO. WHY DO YOU ASK?
I SAW HIM GO UPSTAIRS.
YES. HE WENT UPSTAIRS TO SPEAK TO ELIZABETH ABOUT SOMETHING.
YES, BUT I DIDN'T SEE HIM LEAVE.
HE'S BEEN UP THERE FOR FORTY MINUTES!
RIGHT. OKAY. I'LL GO CHECK.

THAT'S MY AUNT. SHE LIVES IN NEW YORK WITH AN APARTMENT FULL OF FERRETS AND A LITTLE WIMP FOR A HUSBAND. SHE HATES MY DAD.
I THINK A FAMILY THIS BIG WOULD BE MOSTLY EMBARASSING.
I THINK IT'S NICE TO HAVE HISTORY. THAT'S MY MOTHER'S FATHER. HE DIED FIGHTING THE EGYPTIANS.
YOUR DAD DIED FIGHTING, RIGHT? IF HE WERE ALIVE YOU'D BE MORE PROUD THAN EMBARASSED.
YOU KNOW... I HAVEN'T REALLY THOUGHT—
ELIZABETH?
DINNER'S ALMOST READY. FISK CAN JOIN US IF HE'D LIKE.
OKAY!

HOW'D IT GO?
IT WENT OKAY.
ARE YOU STILL GOING OUT?
WE'RE GOOD FRIENDS. "KISSING FRIENDS".
YOU DON'T SOUND HAPPY.
PLISH
PLISH
PLISH
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.

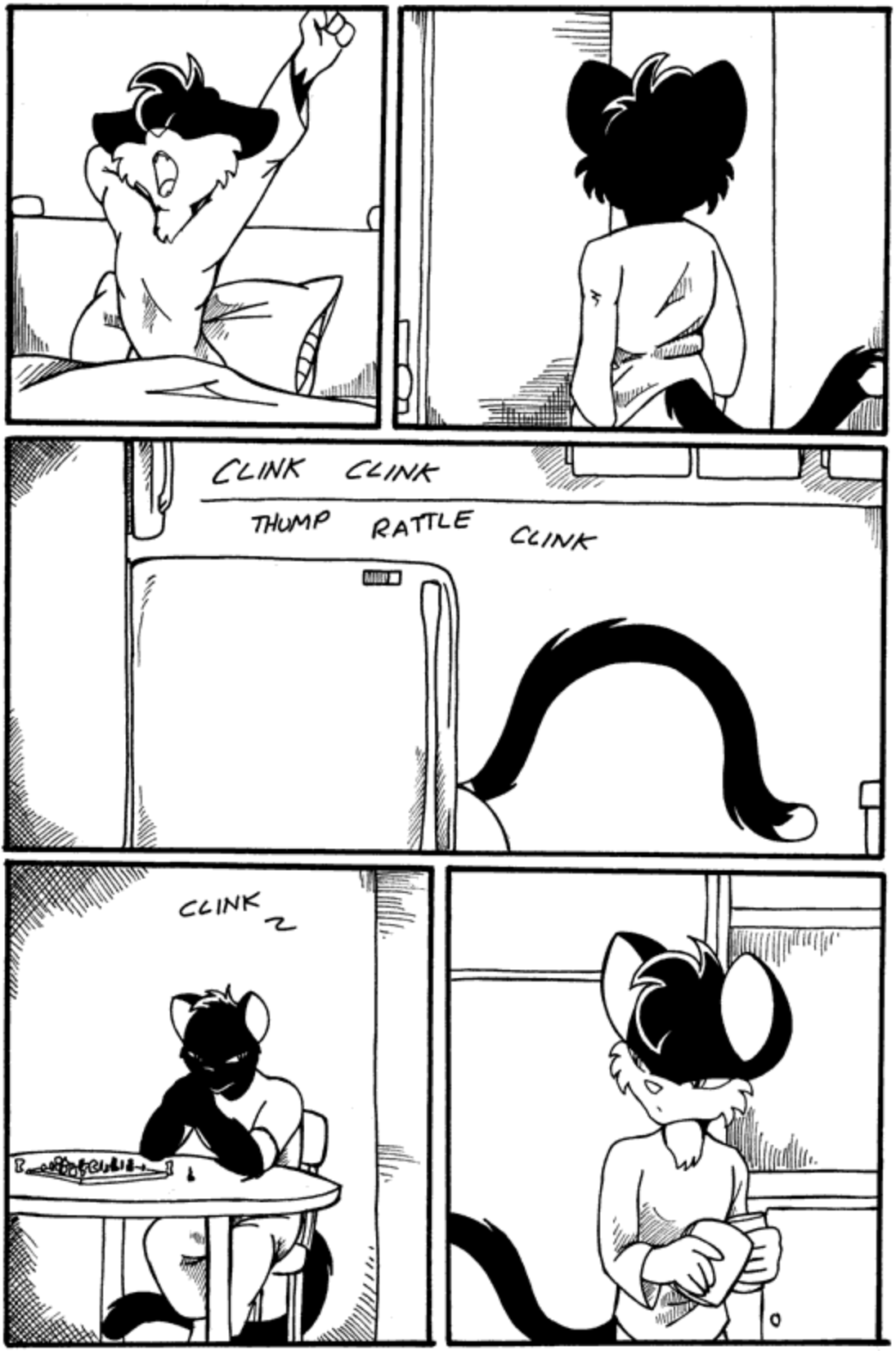

PART OF WHAT YOU SAID WAS TRUE. WE'RE SMART ENOUGH TO SEE IT. WE CAN LOOK FORWARD AND SEE THE INEVITABILITY OF A BREAK-UP SIMPLY BECAUSE THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF A "NEXT STEP" FOUR, FIVE, OR TEN YEARS FROM NOW. SHE'S PERFECT IN EVERY WAY EXCEPT FOR THAT. HER PARENTS ARE JUST CONVINCED WE'LL RUN OUR COURSE AND GROW APART. SO, WE'VE AGREED ON A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP.
MY MIND TELLS ME IT'S BEST, BUT MY HEART IS REFUSING TO LISTEN.
YOU LIKE HER THAT MUCH?
I WISH I COULD CHANGE HOW I FEEL. IT JUST FEELS WORSE THAT SHE SEEMS PERFECTLY FINE WITH IT.
YOU CAN'T JUST ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE WHILE YOU HAVE IT?
NOT WHILE I'M JUST WAITING FOR A MOUSE TO COME AND TAKE HER ANDTEAR MY GUTS OUT.
YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND SOMEONE BEFORE SHE DOES, ANYHOW.
I SUPPOSE IF I MANAGED TO FIND SOMEONE WHO WASN'T AS DUMB AS A SACK OF HAMMERS OR UGLY AS SIN...

SIGH...
END

WIRRRRRR
LOOK AT THIS MESS!
BEEP
BEEPLE
MY GRACIOUS!
PUT ON A SWEATER!
SCHLORP
THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE THE WRECK OF THE HESPERAS!

WIRRR
RRRR
...R
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE SPASTIC CLEANING, MOM?
WE'RE HAVING COMPANY.
WHO?
THE KELSOS ARE STOPPING OVER FOR THE NIGHT ON THEIR WAY TO FLORIDA.
WHO?
THEY'RE OLD FRIENDS OF MINE AND YOUR FATHER'S. THEY HELPED ME A LOT WHEN HE DIED.
OH. DO THEY SLEEP EARLY?
STUFF
STUFF
YES. THE STEREO WILL BE PLAYED AT A TOLERABLE LEVEL, PLEASE.
=SIGH= ALL RIGHT.
IF MADONNA'S HALF AS TALENTED AS YOU CLAIM, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY HER AT A REASONABLE, INDOOR VOLUME AS WELL.
FINE.

COME IN, YOU TWO! HOW WAS YOUR TRIP?
GLAD IT'S NEARLY OVER!
HOW ABOUT YOU, MM? DOING OKAY?
HANGING IN THERE, MIMI.
AND THE KITTENS? I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE THEY WERE THIS BIG.
GROWING LIKE WEEDS!
:GASP: IS THAT FISK? HE LOOKS JUST LIKE HIS FATHER!
?
I SURE REMEMBER THOSE EYES.


CLINK CLINK
THUMP RATTLE CLINK
CLINK 2

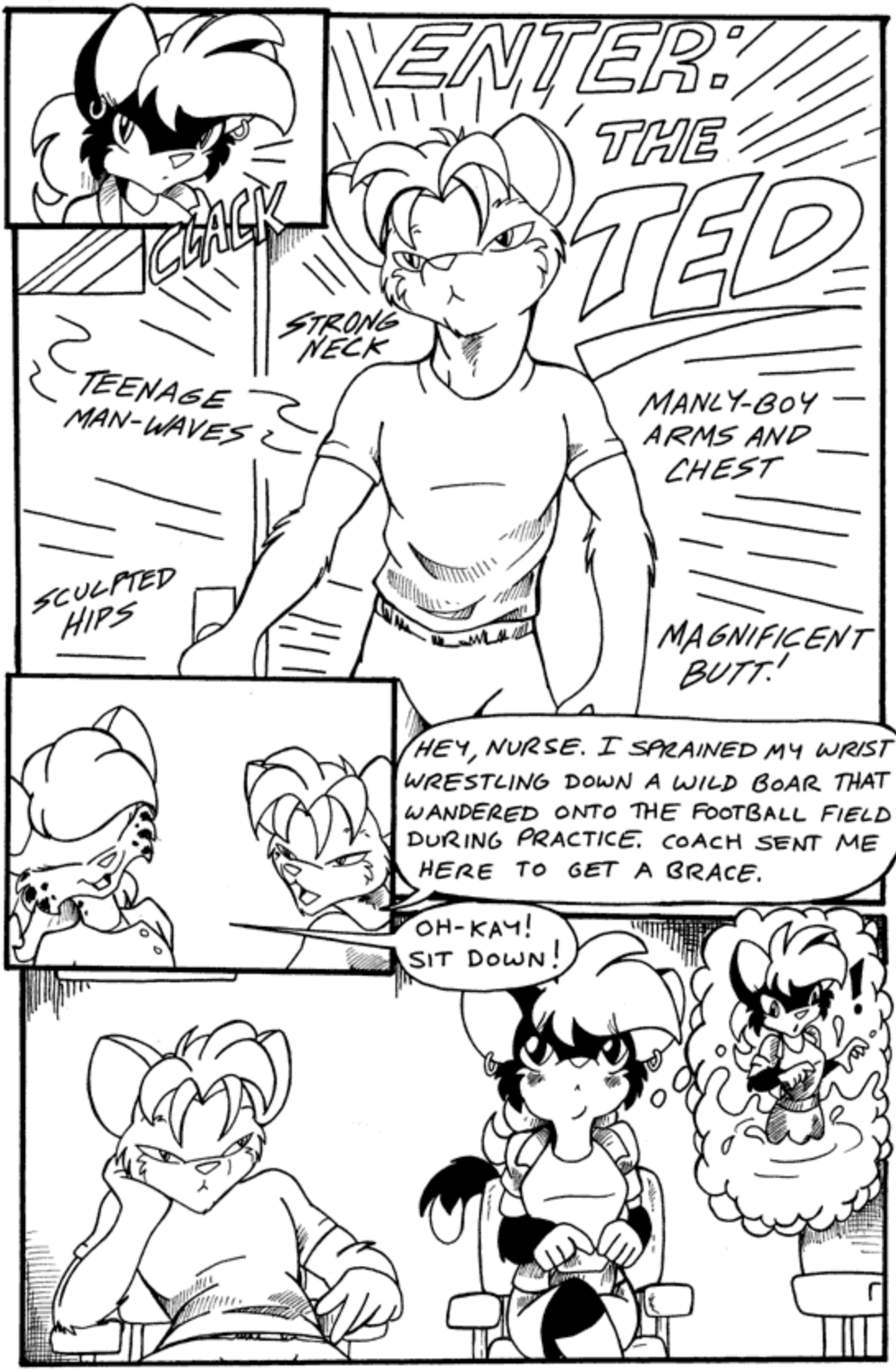
YOU PLAY CHESS BY YOURSELF?
WHEN THERE'S NO ONE ELSE AROUND.
I USED TO PLAY WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, BUT IT'S BEEN A FEW YEARS.
WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT TOO BUSY, PULL UP A CHAIR AND TAKE A SIDE? WE'LL SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.
OKAY. SURE. TURN THE BOARD. I'LL TAKE BLACK.

WHY'D YOU CHOOSE BLACK, FISK?
NOT SURE. IT ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS A SNEAKY COLOR
IT'S TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH EVIL, OR THE BAD SIDE OF A FIGHT.
I DON'T THINK THE BLACK PIECES SEE IT THAT WAY. I DON'T THINK ANY SIDE FIGHTS FOR WHAT THEY THINK IS WRONG. I THINK IT'S JUST A CLASH OF DIFFERENCES...
WHY CLASH, THEN?
...
I THINK WHEN IDEAS ENTER INTO COMPETITION, THEY HAVE TO RESOLVE DOMINANCE. I GUESS THE ONLY TRUELY "BAD" IDEA IS ONE THAT TAKES AWAY SELF DETERMINATION.
THAT'S A PRETTY STARTLING CONCLUSION FROM SUCH A YOUNG MAN, FISK. VERY INTERESTING.

MOM SAID YOU KNEW MY DAD DURING THE WAR.
THAT'S RIGHT. I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF HIM IF YOU KNEW HIM. IT REALLY TORE ME UP WHEN HE DIED.
WHAT WAS HE LIKE?
DEDICATED AND RELIABLE. HE WAS WILLING TO DIE TO GIVE YOU THE BEST LIFE POSSIBLE, EVEN IF HE WOULD NEVER LAY EYES ON YOU.
WAS IT WORTH IT?
WHAT'S THAT?
VIETNAM.
...
I'VE BEEN ALL OVER THE WORLD AND I'VE SEEN A LOT OF STRIFE. I SEE HOW PEOPLE LIVE IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND SO DID YOUR FATHER. OUTSIDE OF THE AMERICAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, WHEREVER WE RETREAT, WHEREVER WE DON'T EXTEND OUR PROTECTION, I'VE SEEN PEOPLE SUFFER. I LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE, HERE, WITH A NICE HOUSE, WARM SHEETS, PLENTY OF FOOD, NO FEAR OF SOCIETY CRUMBLING AROUND YOUR EARS. YOU HAVE A MOTHER AND A SISTER WHO LOVE YOU DEARLY, A FAMILY THAT SOME WOULD LOVE TO BE A PART OF. YOUR FATHER DIED TO SECURE THIS FOR YOU, FISK. IF HE HADN'T, SOMEONE ELSE'S FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD TO...

THE COLD WAR IS AN ELABORATE GAME OF CHESS. WE FIGHT OVER IMPORTANT SQUARES, AND FOR DOMINANCE OVER SQUARES WE DON'T OCCUPY. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST CASTLE YOUR KING WHILE YOUR ENEMIES MASS AGAINST YOU. WE FIGHT TO HOLD THEM, DISRUPT THEM, AND BLEED THEM OF RESOURCES IN THE HOPES THAT SOMEDAY YOU, OR YOUR CHILDREN, WILL NOT HAVE TO FACE THE THREAT OF COMMUNIST HEGEMONY.
SO, WAS VIETNAM WORTH IT?
WE LEARNED A LOT FROM THAT CONFLICT. WE'VE LEARNED THINGS THAT WILL ENSURE THEY'LL PAY DEARLY FOR THEIR VICTORY THERE. ONLY THE FUTURE WILL SHOW THE RESULTS OF OUR RESOLVE.
HOPEFULLY, IN THE END, WE'LL BE THE ONES SAYING...
"CHECKMATE"!
TOK
DANG!
THAT WAS A GOOD GAME, FISK. YOU'LL MAKE A GOOD CHESS PLAYER, SOME DAY.
END

SPRAYBERR
HIGH SCHOO
NURSE
HAVE A SEAT, LUCY. YOUR MOTHER SHOULD BE HERE ANY MOMENT.
OKAY.


ENTER: THE TED
CLACK
STRONG NECK
TEENAGE MAN-WAVES
MANLY-BOY ARMS AND CHEST
SCULPTED HIPS
MAGNIFICENT BUTT!
HEY, NURSE. I SPRAINED MY WRIST WRESTLING DOWN A WILD BOAR THAT WANDERED ONTO THE FOOTBALL FIELD DURING PRACTICE. COACH SENT ME HERE TO GET A BRACE.
OH-KAY! SIT DOWN!
!

READY TO GO, LUCY?
I GUESS.
WHO WAS THAT WOMAN?
SIT DOWN!

IS THIS HER FIRST EXAM?
YES.
HAVE A SEAT AND WE'LL CALL YOU IN A MOMENT.
WHAT'S THIS DOCTOR LIKE?
CALM AND NICE. PLUS, SHE'S A WOMAN, WHICH SHOULD BE LESS CREEPY FOR YOU.
COME ON BACK, LUCY. WE'RE READY.
GLUG GLUG
LAP LAP

WHY AM I GOING ON THE PILL? I'M NOT HAVING SEX.
I WANT YOU TO GET USED TO THE ROUTINE, NOW.
THIS IS EMBARASSING.
MY SISTER HAD A SCARE WHEN I WAS GROWING UP. NOW, THAT'S EMBARASSING.
YOU SEE, LITTLE BOYS SPREAD STRESS AND MISERY, WHILE LITTLE GIRLS GATHER IT FROM FAR AND WIDE AND BRING IT RIGHT HOME.
WE'RE NOT KILLING UNBORN KITTENS IN THIS FAMILY, AND I DON'T WANT GRANDKITTENS UNTIL I'M AT LEAST FORTY-FIVE.
AREN'T THESE KIND OF LIKE GIVING ME PERMISSION TO HAVE SEX?
WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU ASKED FOR MY PERMISSION TO DO SOMETHING STUPID?
OH.

HEY, FANG. YOU KNOW LUCY BLACK?
YEAH.
I'VE GOT A PLAN. I'M GOING TO ASK HER OUT THIS FRIDAY.
BUT ISN'T SHE A FRESHMAN?
YES, BUT DID YOU SEE HER MOTHER? HOLY SHIT!
SHE'S PERFECT! A PORCELAIN WHITE GODDESS WITH AN ASS TO DIE FOR!
DON'T GET SO CLOSE WITHOUT PANTS.
YOU'RE GOING TO GO OUT WITH A GIRL TO GET AT HER MOTHER? SHE'S A GROWN WOMAN, DUDE.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND WOMEN, FANG. FORBIDDEN ROMANCE IS BIG WITH THEM. I THINK IF I PLAY THINGS RIGHT, I HAVE A CHANCE.

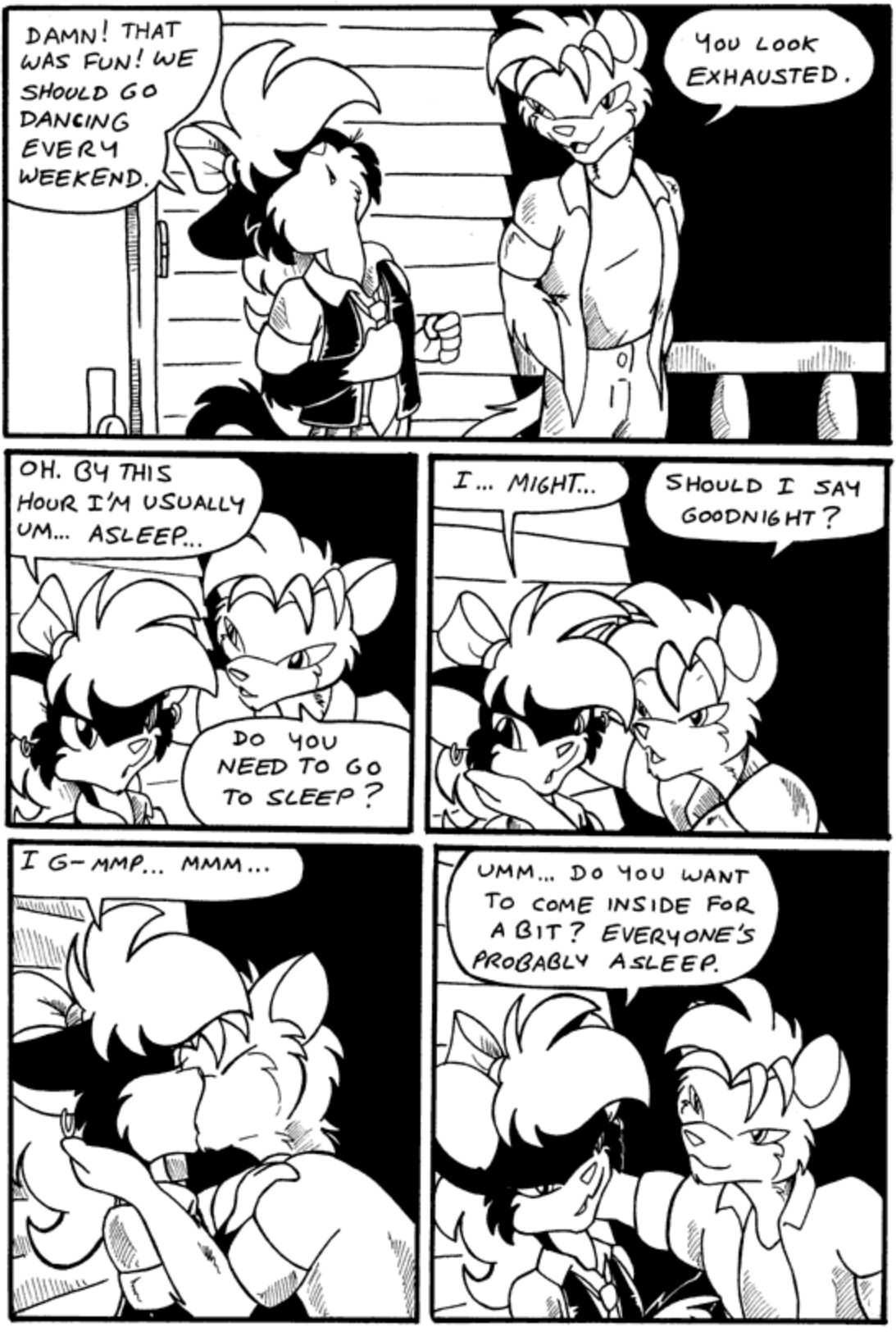
BRRIIING!
HELLO?
HELLO. IS LUCY AVAILABLE?
SHE'S IN THE SHOWER RIGHT NOW.
AH. WELL, COULD YOU TELL HER TED STEPHENS CALLED.
YOU SOUND CLOSE TO RAY STEVENS. ARE YOU RELATED?
NO, DUDE. JUST TELL HER—
YOU CALLED, RIGHT, RAY STEVENS. SHOULD SHE CALL YOU BACK?
SURE, LET ME GIVE YOU MY NUMBER...
WAIT... DID YOU SAY I WAS RAY STEVENS?
NO, TED STEPHENS. WITH A "V"?
NO NO. A "PH"... WAIT, WHAT'S IT MATTER?
NEVERMIND. JUST LET ME HAVE YOUR NUMBER, RAY, AND I'LL GIVE IT TO HER WHEN SHE GETS OUT.
DUDE...

ONLY WHEN I'M DANCIN' CAN I FEEL THIS FREEEE
WIGGLE
SHAKE
SLIIIIIIIDE
BUMP!
AT NIGHT I LOCK THE DOORS, WHERE NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE-EE
I'M TIRED OF DANCIN' HERE ALL BY MY SE-ELF
CLICK
BUMP!
TO-NIGHT I WANNA DANCE WITH SOME-ONE-ELSE
YEEEK!
FISK! DON'T YOU KNOCK!?
YEAH, I DID.

LET ME GET MY BRITCHES ON!
TED STEPHENS CALLED.
UFF!
TED!? WHEN!?
WHEN YOU WERE IN THE SHOWER.
TED? THE MOST GORGEOUS CAT IN SCHOOL TED?
JUST CALL HIM, OKAY. I PUT HIS NUMBER NEXT TO THE PHONE.
I CAN'T JUST CALL HIM... I'LL LOOK DESPERATE.

DINNER'S ALMOST READY! IT'S FRIED CHICKEN!
OH! I'M GOING OUT, TONIGHT.
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME. DO YOU NEED A RIDE?
NO. HE HAS A CAR.
WHAT? WHO HAS A CAR?
A GUY FROM SCHOOL...
OW!
WHOOOOOO?

SORRY IT TOOK A WHILE. MY MOTHER WAS SPAZZING A LITTLE.
OH?
BECAUSE YOU'RE SIXTEEN. SHE'S GOT THIS WHOLE PARANOID OUTLOOK ABOUT ME.
FFT. MY BROTHER COULD GO OUT WITH A GAY MONKEY AND SHE WOULDN'T CARE.
SHE USED TO DATE GUYS ALL THE TIME WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER.
OH HO! REALLY?


DAMN! THAT WAS FUN! WE SHOULD GO DANCING EVERY WEEKEND.
YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED.
OH. BY THIS HOUR I'M USUALLY UM... ASLEEP...
DO YOU NEED TO GO TO SLEEP?
I... MIGHT...
SHOULD I SAY GOODNIGHT?
I G-MMP... MMM...
UMM... DO YOU WANT TO COME INSIDE FOR A BIT? EVERYONE'S PROBABLY ASLEEP.

zzZZzz...
MMMM HMM-MM
CLICK!

SQUEAK!
CLIK!
BLINK
!
SHHHH
HHHHH
HMM-
MMM
SHHHHHHHHHHH
SQUEAK!

ZZMMZZ...
OOOOOOO... MROWWWL... MM ...OHHH, TED...
PINCH
PINCH PINCH
OH YEAH, BABY. TAKE THAT PERKY BUTT INTO THE KITCHEN AND FIX ME A HAM SANDWICH.
AAAGH!
F*CK!
SHIT! FUCK! WHAT?

IT'S NOT FUNNY, YOU LITTLE ASSHOLE!
THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE WAS!
TED! SORRY! I FELL ASLEEP.
OH, IT'S OKAY. I WAS UPSTAIRS LOOKING FOR THE BATHROOM.
HEE...
WHEW...
FISK WAS JUST BEING A JUVENILE DICK.
FISK'S GOING TO BED.

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT, FANG.
MMM.
LUCY'S GOING TO A SLUMBER PARTY TONIGHT. HER BROTHER'S SPENDING THE NIGHT WITH HIS FRIENDS...
SHEILA BLACK WILL BE ALL ALONE WHEN I SHOW UP TO LAY ON THE BOYISH CHARM.
HOW DO I LOOK?
HOMOSEXUAL.
OH, FUCK YOU. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WOMEN, ANYWAY.

AHHH...
DING DONG
CLINK
WHO IN THE-
OH! OH MY...
HEE!

OH DEAR! TED!
DON'T YOU JUST LOOK CHARMING!
BUT LUCY'S OVER AT ELIZABETH'S HOUSE, TONIGHT. SHE'S JUST TWO HOUSES DOWN IF YOU WANT TO IMPRESS HER.
OH I SEE. MISS BLACK, IT'S NOT EASY FOR ME TO TELL YOU HOW GRATEFUL I AM FOR YOU ALLOWING LUCY TO GO OUT WITH ME.
YOU'RE AN AWESOME, STRONG WOMAN AND I THINK LUCY IS LUCKY TO HAVE YOU AS A MOTHER.
I THINK YOU DESERVE THESE, SHEILA.
OH!
SO, I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW MY APPRECIATION BY TREATING YOU TO DINNER, SOMETIME.

MMM.
DINNER WITH LUCY AND I? THAT'S AN AMAZING GESTURE, TED.
I... HAD MY HEART ON SPEAKING WITH YOU OVER DINNER... ALONE PERHAPS.
ALONE? IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT ON YOUR MIND, TED?
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE YOUNG AND UNSURE... IT'S HARD TO EXPRESS HOW I FEEL...
TED... ARE YOU ASKING ME OUT ON A DATE?
OH!
OH, YEAH.

TED, YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BE A BAD MOTHER. I RAISED LUCY AGAINST A LOT OF TOUGH ODDS. I BUILT A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER AND SHE TRUSTS ME AS SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN THROUGH LIFE AHEAD OF HER AND IS LOOKING OUT FOR HER...
YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BETRAY HER FOR A DATE WITH HER BOYFRIEND AND A CHANCE AT SOME SIXTEEN YEAR OLD PIECE OF DICK!?
W—
...YEAH?
GET OFF MY PROPERTY!

WHAT THE HELL!? HOW COULD YOU DO S-SOMETHING SO SICK AND SLIMY!!? JESUS T-TED!
CHRIST, I DON'T NEED ALL THIS EMOTIONAL BULLSHIT, RIGHT NOW!
YOU THINK I'M AFRAID OF YOU GETTING UPSET!?
FRESHMAN BITCHES LIKE YOU ARE A DIME PER DOZEN. NOW GET OFF MY CASE.
!
END

SOB!
YEESH.
WIMPER...
...
SOBBB!
CHOKE
THUMP
THUMP

LUCY?
WHAT?
YOU SOUNDED TERRIBLE.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SOUND, FISK?
WELL, AT LEAST YOU ONLY WENT OUT ON ONE DATE...
THAT'S NOT THE POINT! HE MADE ME FEEL LIKE A NOBODY! LIKE I WAS N-NOTHING BUT A WORTHLESS FLECK OF SHIT TO BE FLICKED ASIDE!
HAS ANYBODY EVER MADE YOU FEEL LIKE THAT!?

I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE OUT WITH HIM! SICK JOCK FUCKER... HOW CAN A GUY BE THAT WAY...
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT. I'M JUST A DIME PER DOZEN. ANOTHER STUPID GIRL WHO'LL DO ANYTHING.
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER DUMB GIRL. I ONLY HAVE ONE TWIN, YOU KNOW.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
WHAT I MEAN IS NO ONE EXPECTS YOU TO BE PERFECT OR HAVE FLAWLESS JUDGEMENT. BUT YOU'RE NOT JUST ANY GIRL. YOU'RE MY SISTER, AND I THINK I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN SOME FUCKING JOCK.
I HATE TO SEE YOU LIKE THIS. EVER SINCE YOU ALMOST DIED WHEN WE WERE NINE I'VE FELT MORE LIKE YOUR OLDER BROTHER THAN YOUR TWIN.
I THINK TED KNOWS HOW BADLY HE HURT YOU, BUT SOMETIMES OUR PRIDE IS TOUGHER THAN OUR SENSE OF HONOR. YOU'LL GET OVER ALL THIS IN TIME AND YOU'LL BE A BETTER JUDGE OF OTHERS AS A RESULT.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP YOU FEEL BETTER UNTIL THEN, THOUGH.
YOU WILL?
WILL YOU GO SHOPPING WITH ME, TOMMOROW?

HOW DOES THE MALL HELP?
MALLS ARE MAGICAL. THEY'RE BIG BUFFETS OF SHOPPING THERAPY.
WOULDN'T YOU RATHER GO SHOPPING WITH ELIZABETH?
NO. SHE'S NOT A GUY.
I NEED A NEW SET OF OUTFITS. NOTHING'S MORE HEALING THAN FEELING BEAUTIFUL AND WANTED. YOU'RE A GUY, SO YOU KNOW WHAT GUYS LIKE. I NEED YOUR INPUT.
I LOVE ELIZABETH AS A DEAR FRIEND, BUT HER CHOICE IN CLOTHING IS JUST... WELL... SO NOT ME.
GUYS LOVE GIRLS WHO PLAY ARCADE GAMES.
COME ON...

THIS IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO START.
NO, I'M NOT A 'PROSTITUTE' Boutique
OUTSTANDING.
YOU CAN TELL THESE ARE QUALITY CLOTHES BY THE PRICES.
THIS ONE HAS RIPS IN IT. IF I WORE IT, YOU COULD SEE MY BRA.
DO YOU THINK A BLACK BRA WOULD LOOK BETTER UNDER IT? BECAUSE IF SO I'D HAVE TO BUY ONE. FISK?
OH CHRIST, FISK.

HOW'S THIS?
COACH
CUTE.
MAYBE THIS IS TOO SLUTTY.
TRYING TOO HARD.
RAR?
WORDS FAIL ME.
I THINK YOU SHOULD WEAR THE OTHER ONE.
WHAT OTHER ONE?
YOU KNOW THE ONE.
NO.
WEAR IT.
FIIIIISK...
YOU'RE SUCH A PERV.
OH YES. PUT ON THAT POUTY FACE.
JUST LIKE THAT.

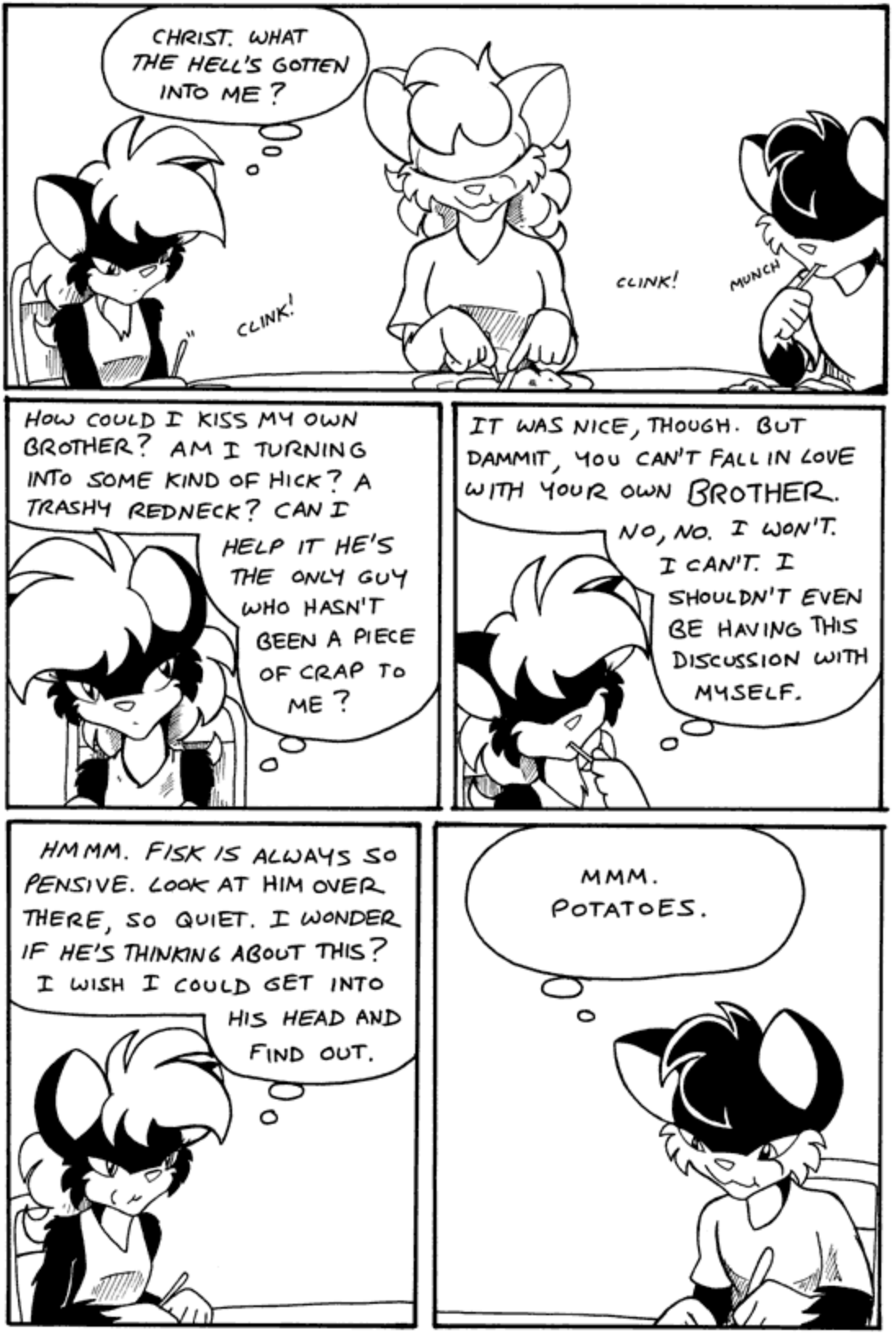
HOW'D YOU AFFORD ALL THAT ON YOUR ALLOWANCE?
WELL, FISK HELPED A LITTLE. HE THOUGHT I NEEDED IT MORE THAN HE DID.
AWWW! WHAT A LITTLE HERO!
YEAH.
WHAT... IS THIS?
UM. THONG UNDERWEAR.
SO PEOPLE DON'T SEE PANTY LINES ON MY BUTT WHEN I WEAR TIGHT SKIRTS.
TIGHT SKIRTS!?

FISK DID THAT?! WHAT AN AWESOME BROTHER!
I GUESS.
WE CAN'T EVEN GET MY BROTHER TO DO THE DISHES WHEN IT'S HIS TURN.
YOUR BROTHER'S SUCH A SWEET GUY!
IT'S TOO BAD HE'S NOT A MOUSE.
YEAH. THAT'S TOO BAD.

FISK. DO YOU EVER MISS BEING WITH ELIZABETH?
MM? OF COURSE I DO.
CLICK CLICKITY
WHY HAVEN'T YOU PURSUED ANOTHER GIRLFRIEND?
CLICK
I DON'T FEEL LIKE I FIT IN WITH ANYBODY. THINGS ARE JUST UNCOMFORTABLE. I DON'T WANT TO PLAY THE "IMPRESS ME" GAME, OR COMPETE WITH GUYS WHO LOOK LIKE TED.
EVERY-THING I TRY TO PURSUE FALLS APART. I GUESS I'M JUST TIRED OF IT.
I COULD HOOK YOU UP WITH SOMEONE WHO SEEMS NICE.
LUCY, I DON'T TRUST ANYONE WHO JUST SEEMS NICE.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO EVER BE HAPPY IF YOU DON'T TRUST ANYONE?
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN...
YOU TRUST ME AT LEAST, RIGHT?
OF COURSE I TRUST MY SISTER.

I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID THAT...
IT'S OKAY.
IT'S JUST-
KIDS! DINNER'S READY!


CHRIST. WHAT THE HELL'S GOTTEN INTO ME?
CLINK!
CLINK!
MUNCH
HOW COULD I KISS MY OWN BROTHER? AM I TURNING INTO SOME KIND OF HICK? A TRASHY REDNECK? CAN I HELP IT HE'S THE ONLY GUY WHO HASN'T BEEN A PIECE OF CRAP TO ME?
IT WAS NICE, THOUGH. BUT DAMMIT, YOU CAN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR OWN BROTHER.
NO, NO. I WON'T. I CAN'T. I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HAVING THIS DISCUSSION WITH MYSELF.
HMMM. FISK IS ALWAYS SO PENSIVE. LOOK AT HIM OVER THERE, SO QUIET. I WONDER IF HE'S THINKING ABOUT THIS? I WISH I COULD GET INTO HIS HEAD AND FIND OUT.
MMM. POTATOES.

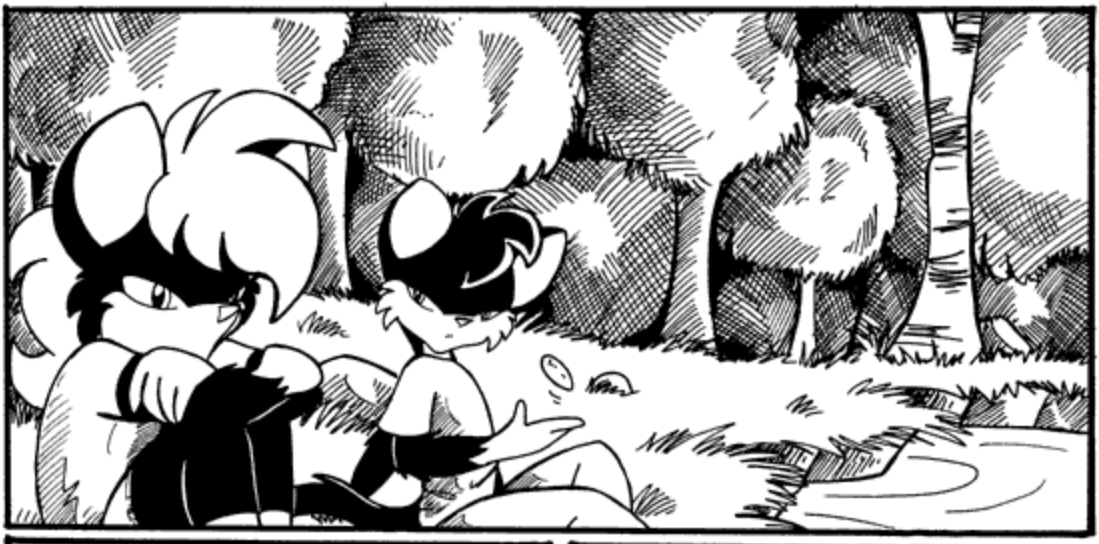
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M STILL THINKING ABOUT TED.
AT LEAST TOMMOROW'S SUNDAY. SO WHO CARES IF I CAN'T SLEEP.
I NEED SOMEONE TO HOLD. HOW AM I EVER GOING TO TRUST ANOTHER GUY FOR THAT THOUGH...
MAYBE I CAN GO TALK TO FISK, AGAIN. HE'S PROBABLY TRYING TO SLEEP.
I'VE BEEN TAKING A LOT OF HIS TIME, THOUGH. I HATE TO IMPOSE SO MUCH.

GO AHEAD. SLIP OFF TO FISK'S ROOM. YOU KNOW HOW THAT TURNED OUT THE LAST TIME.
THAT'S NOT WHY SHE WANTS TO GO! LUCY JUST NEEDS TO KNOW SOMEONE CARES!
SHE'S THOUGHT ABOUT IT! NO DENYING!
SO WILL A HEADACHE BUT WE STILL TAKE ASPIRIN!
LIVE A LITTLE!
SHE'S STILL IN PAIN! THOSE THOUGHTS WILL FADE.
MAKING OUT IS WAY DIFFERENT FROM ASPIRIN!
NOT WITH HER BROTHER!
POOF!
WHAT WILL BE IS WHAT SHE WILL KNOW HAS BEEN DONE.
WHAT?
SHAH..
COP OUT.

CLIK!
CLIK
I WAS LONELY.
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE.

TWEET
BLINK
ZZMMZZM
S
!
ZZMMZZRRWW.
?
GASP
GZZZZZM

NNF...?
SCOOTCH
SNUG
GOOD MORNING.
OH!
MMM...
NUZ
I'M GOING BACK TO MY ROOM BEFORE MOM WAKES UP.

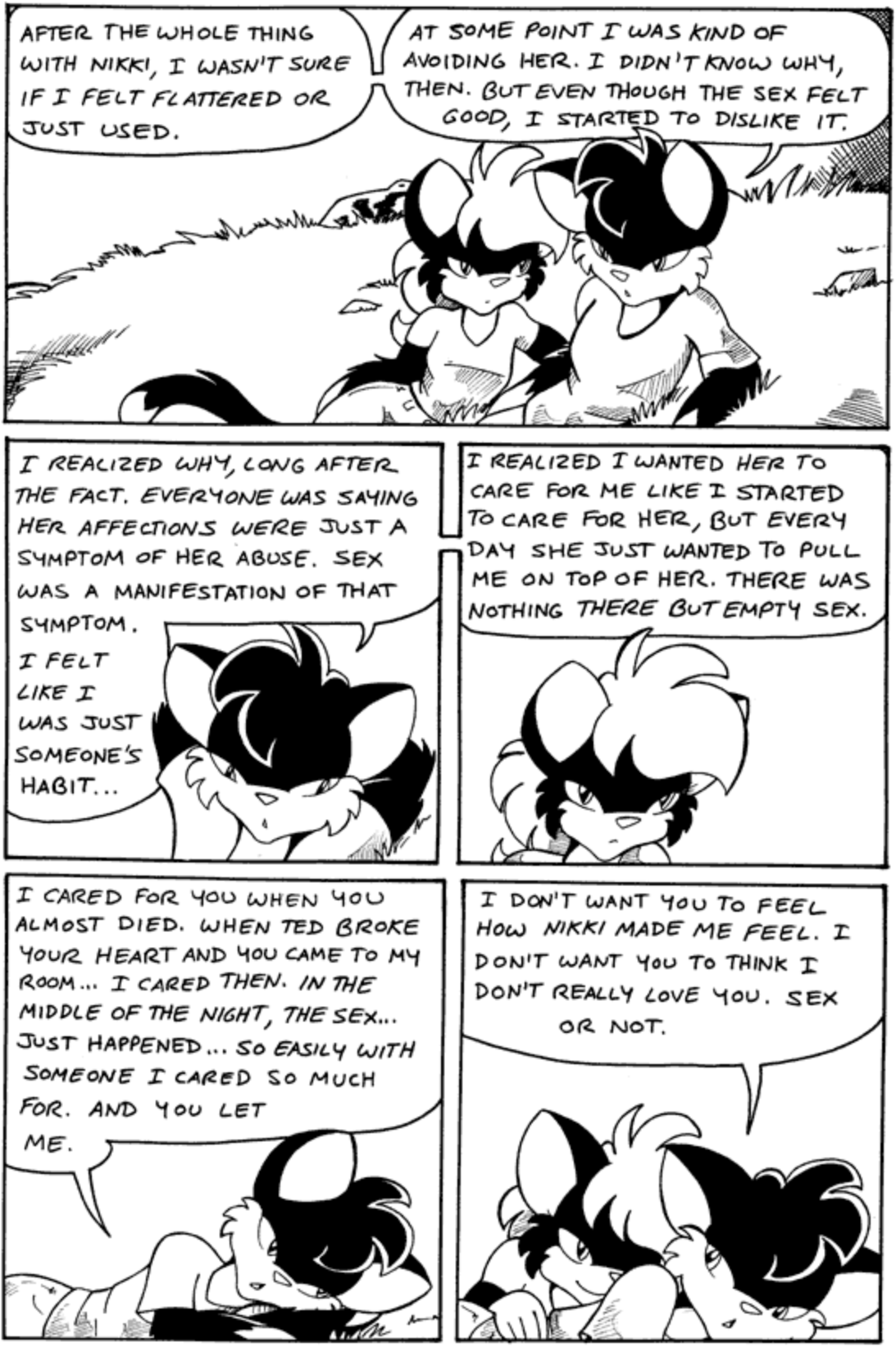


THAT WAS WRONG, HUH?

WRONG BY US?
SWING

I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS IT FEELS THAT WAY. WE DID SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE TO KEEP A SECRET.

WHAT KIND OF FEELINGS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME? EVEN IF I WASN'T YOUR SISTER?


AFTER THE WHOLE THING WITH NIKKI, I WASN'T SURE IF I FELT FLATTERED OR JUST USED.
AT SOME POINT I WAS KIND OF AVOIDING HER. I DIDN'T KNOW WHY, THEN. BUT EVEN THOUGH THE SEX FELT GOOD, I STARTED TO DISLIKE IT.
I REALIZED WHY, LONG AFTER THE FACT. EVERYONE WAS SAYING HER AFFECTIONS WERE JUST A SYMPTOM OF HER ABUSE. SEX WAS A MANIFESTATION OF THAT SYMPTOM.
I FELT LIKE I WAS JUST SOMEONE'S HABIT...
I REALIZED I WANTED HER TO CARE FOR ME LIKE I STARTED TO CARE FOR HER, BUT EVERY DAY SHE JUST WANTED TO PULL ME ON TOP OF HER. THERE WAS NOTHING THERE BUT EMPTY SEX.
I CARED FOR YOU WHEN YOU ALMOST DIED. WHEN TED BROKE YOUR HEART AND YOU CAME TO MY ROOM... I CARED THEN. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, THE SEX... JUST HAPPENED... SO EASILY WITH SOMEONE I CARED SO MUCH FOR. AND YOU LET ME.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL HOW NIKKI MADE ME FEEL. I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK I DON'T REALLY LOVE YOU. SEX OR NOT.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, FISK. THIS IS OUR LAST SESSION UNLESS THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE GOING ON YOU'D LIKE TO DISCUSS.
NO. I GUESS I'M FINE. THANK YOU MRS. HOLLINGS.
THE END

WUM
WUM WUM
WUM
WUM
WUM
OFF BALLANCE!
BAM
BAM
BAM
!
FEDERAL EXPRESS
SQUIRRRRP...
BRAWNY PAPER TOWELS... FOR THOSE EXTRA SLOPPY WET MESSES THAT NEED BRAWNY'S MANLY TOUCH...
OH YEAH, USE HIM LIKE A CHEAP RAG YOU FILTHY WHORE.
BLUE BELL

MMM.
GNARMM.
MUNCH
MOM. MY FAVORITE SHIRT HAS A RIP IN THE HE-
CHRIST BOY! GO PUT ON YOUR DAMNED SHIRT! THIS IS A HOUSEHOLD, NOT A BROTHEL!
DON'T GO DOWNSTAIRS. I THINK AUNT FLOW IS IN TOWN.

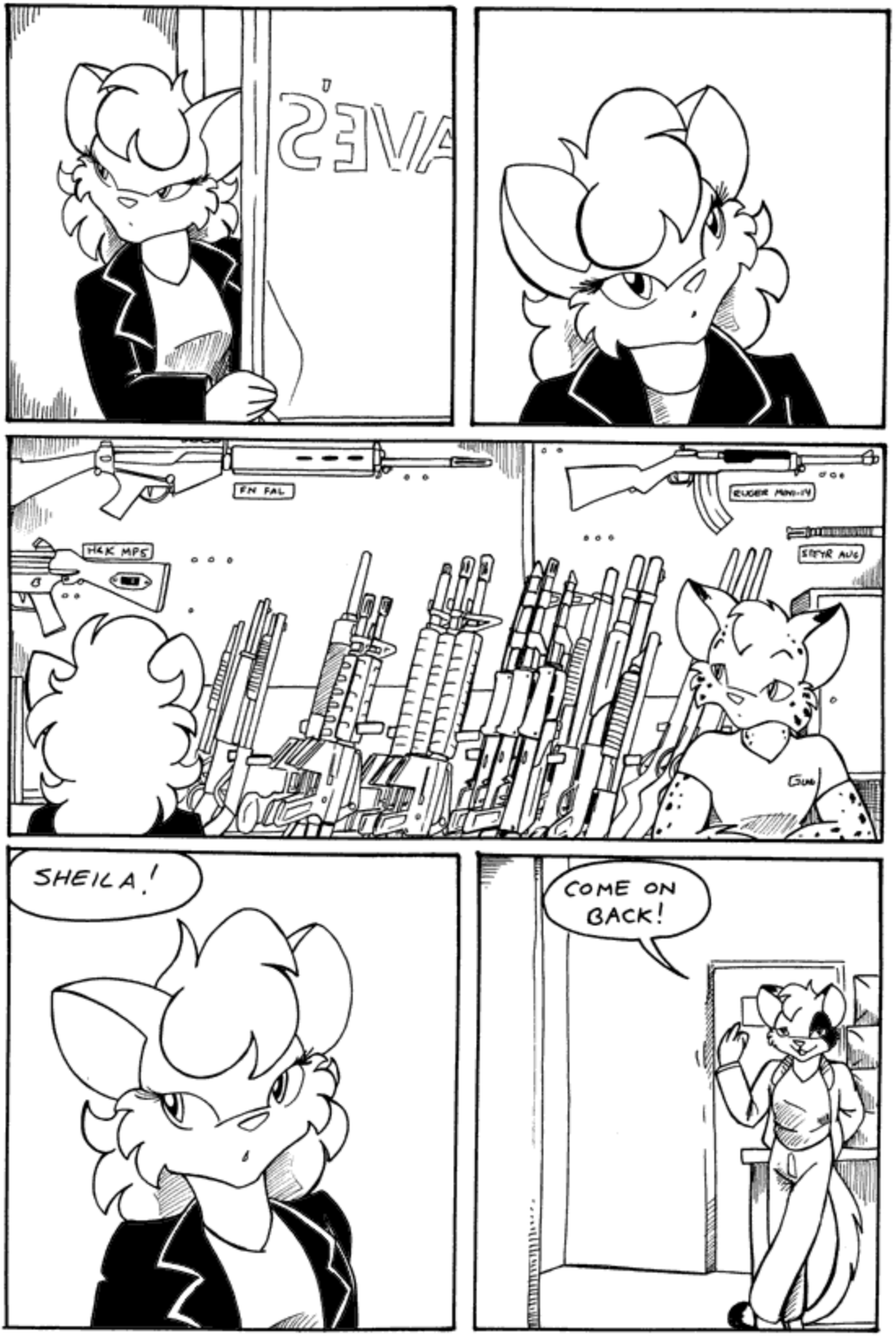
I THINK I'M LOSING MY MIND, KELLY.
OH?
I'M SO TENSE. I YELLED AT FISK YESTERDAY, FOR HARDLY ANY REASON.
YOU SPEND ALL DAY IN THAT HOUSE, LATELY. I KNOW I'D GET A BAD CASE OF CABIN FEVER.
MAYBE YOU NEED A VACATION?
OR A MAN.
OH! SINCE YOU PUT IT THAT WAY! HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN, DEAR?
SINCE HARVE...
OH MY GOD!

ARE YOU NERVOUS ABOUT DATING AGAIN?
SORT OF. I GUESS I'M AFRAID THE INVESTMENT WON'T YEILD A GOOD RETURN, YOU KNOW?
I'M NOT YOUNG ANYMORE. EVERY YEAR IT GETS A LITTLE HARDER TO STAY IN SHAPE. I CAN'T WASTE TIME FROM MAN TO MAN.
AND WHAT IF ONE OF THEM TURNS OUT TO BE... YOU KNOW...
A CREEP.
I KNOW A FEW TRUSTWORTHY BACHELORS. LETS GET YOU HOOKED UP!
OH...

IF YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT THE "CREEPS" YOU CAN LOOK INTO SELF DEFENSE COURSES, MARTIAL ARTS, MAYBE A GUN FOR THE HOME...
WHO'S GOING TO TRAIN SOME HOMEBOUND MOTHER?
WHY DON'T YOU ASK SAM?
SAM?
SAMUEL TOBS, YOUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR? HE TRAINS COBB COUNTY POLICE.
HE'S GOOD FRIENDS WITH MY HUSBAND AND THEY'VE BOTH TAUGHT ME A FEW THINGS. FISK AND HIS SON ARE ALWAYS HANGING OUT TOGETHER. I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT MORE FAMILIAR WITH THEM.
I DON'T KNOW. HIS WIFE GIVES ME A BAD VIBE WHEN I'M NEAR BY, AND THEY'RE ALWAYS FIGHTING.
TRUE. SHE DOES HAVE A CERTAIN "SHREWY" QUALITY.

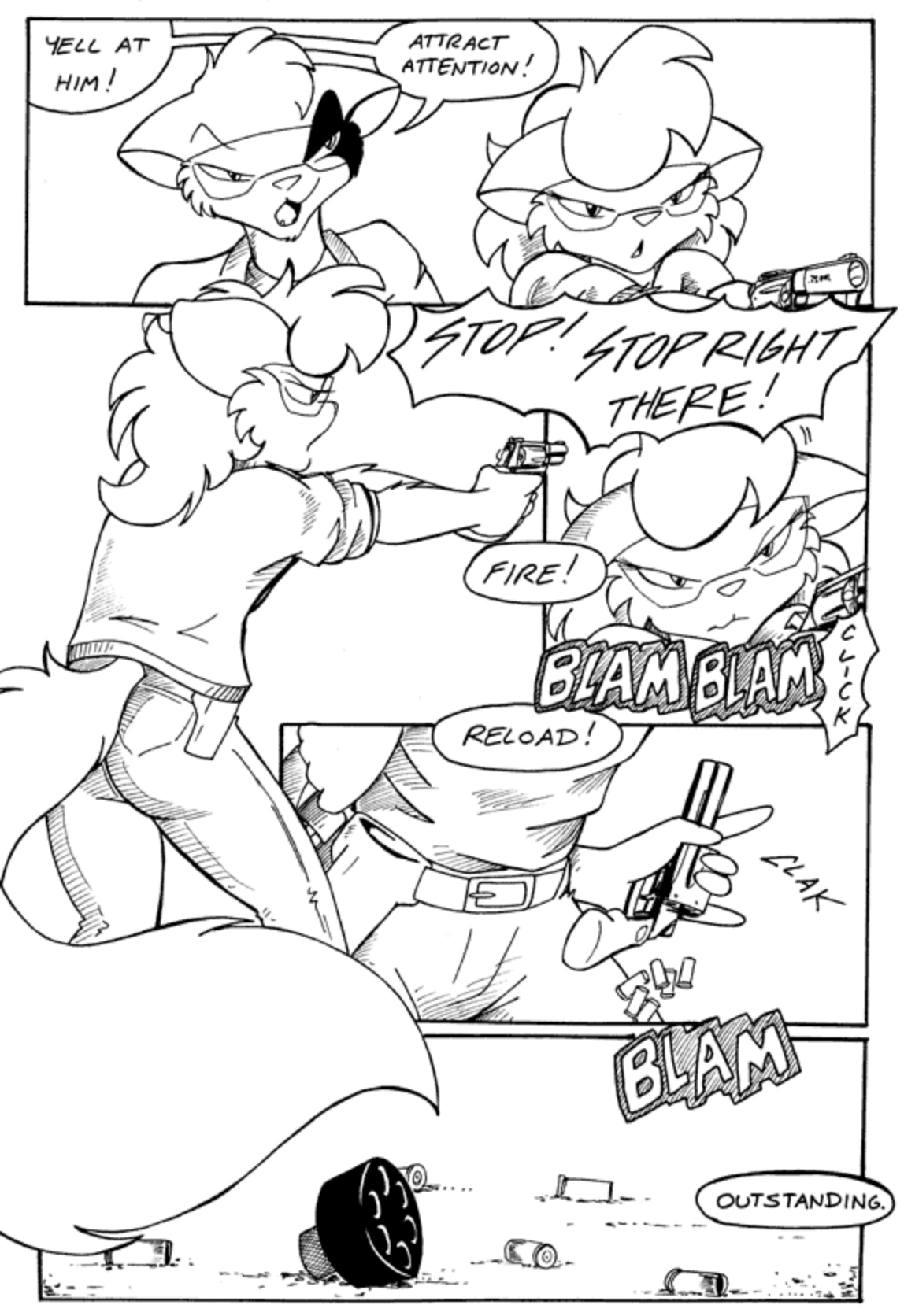
HEY BOYS.
HEY DAD. CAN I HAVE SOME DOUGH SO I CAN HIT THE ARCADE THIS AFTER-NOON?
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW YOUR MOTHER FEELS ABOUT THOSE VIOLENT GAMES, RYAN.
YEAH. I KNOW.
HERE'S A TWENTY. TELL HER YOU WENT TO THE MALL OR SOMETHING.
AWESOME. THANKS, DAD.

GOOD MORNING, SAM.
RAKE RAKE
OH, GOOD MORNING, SHEILA.
UM... HI.
SWISH
KELLY TELLS ME YOU GIVE PERSONAL SELF DEFENSE AND FIREARM INSTRUCTION AS A SIDE BUSINESS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WELL, THAT'S A BIG RESPONSIBILITY. IT'S NOT SOMETHING TO TAKE LIGHTLY...
... BUT... WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS THE BEST PLACE TO TALK IT OVER. I'LL BE AT DAVE'S GUNROOM AFTER 3 TOMMOROW IF YOU'RE STILL SERIOUS.


AVE'S
FN FAL
RUGER MINI-14
H&K MP5
STEYR AUG
SHEILA!
COME ON BACK!

I SUPPOSE THE FIRST THING I SHOULD ASK IS WHY YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THIS?
WELL...
FIVE YEARS AGO... I WAS RAPED. IT WAS IN MY OWN HOUSE. MY SON WOKE UP AND STOPPED IT WITH A BAT...
I DON'T EVER WANT TO FEEL THAT HELPLESS AGAIN.
I'M SORRY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. BUT I HAVEN'T DATED SINCE. AND...
... I REALIZE I HAVE A SECURITY AND A TRUST CONCERN.
IF YOU WERE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION AGAIN, COULD YOU BRING YOURSELF TO USE DEADLY FORCE?
I DON'T THINK I'D HAVE A PROBLEM.

JUST LIKE WE PRACTICED.
JUST KEEP YOUR SIGHTS LINED UP ON THE TARGET AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THE TRIGGER.
DON'T ANTICIPATE THE SHOT AND JUST STAY FOCUSED ON THOSE SIGHTS...
BLAM!
PIFF!
GOOD. GO AHEAD AND SHOOT OUT THE REST OF THE CHAMBERS.

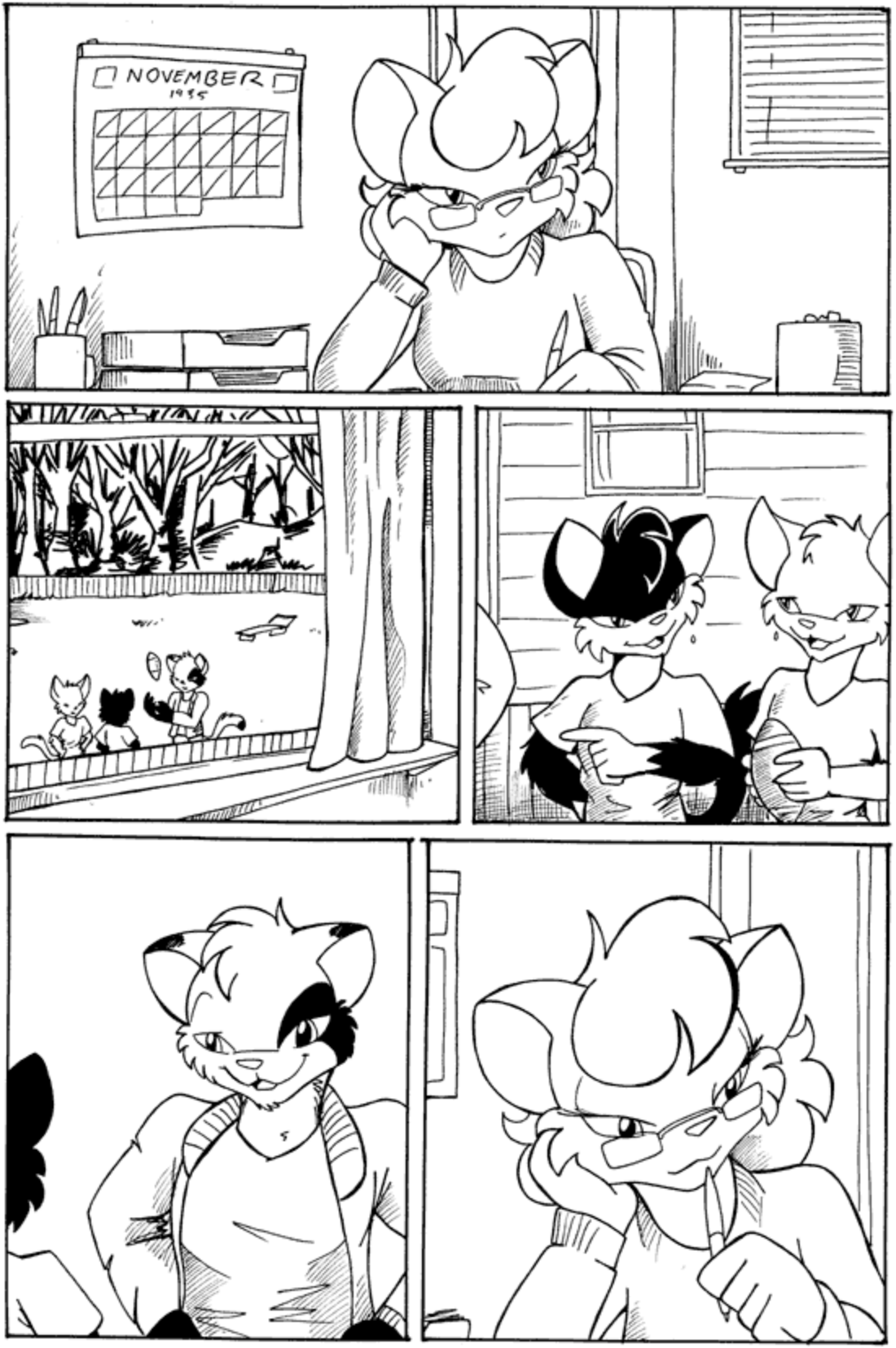

YELL AT HIM!
ATTRACT ATTENTION!
STOP! STOP RIGHT THERE!
FIRE!
BLAM BLAM
CLICK
RELOAD!
CLAK
BLAM
OUTSTANDING.

THAT'S GOOD. COLLECT YOUR TARGET AND TAKE A BREAK.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
YOUR GUNBAG IS BEEPING.
YEAH? OH HI, HONEY.
POP!
MMHM. YEAH. ABOUT SEVEN, TONIGHT.
I'M WITH A CLIENT. UH HUH, SHOOTING.
WHAT'S IT MATTER?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!

YES. I'M AT THE RANGE. YES, I'M GETTING PAID.
NO.
NO! I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION!
OH, I LOVE THE COUCH! IT'S QUIETER AND WARMER!
SHIT!
CLACK!
ZIIIIIIP!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'LL LIVE.
NEXT WEEK WE'LL BE AT THE GYM. I'LL GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS.

YOUR DINNER'S IN THE FRIDGE. RYAN AND I ALREADY ATE.
OKAY. THANKS.

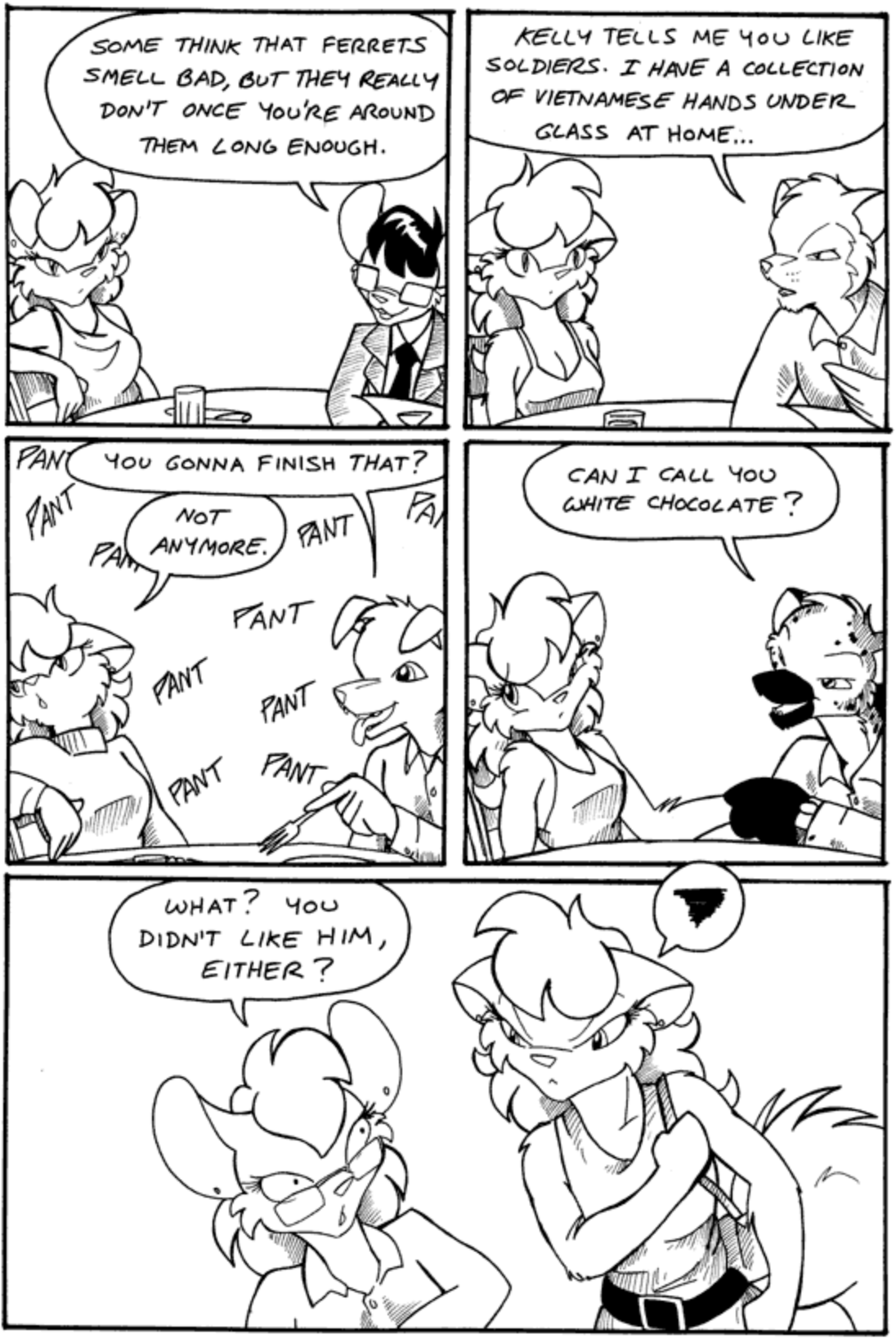
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
UFF!
INTERCEPTION! WOO!
BAH!


NOVEMBER
1995

HELLO MR. TOBS.
OH, HEY SHEILA.
CAN I HAVE MY SON BACK? HE NEEDS TO EAT DINNER.
YOU MAY WANT TO THROW HIM INTO THE SHOWER, FIRST.
WHAT ARE WE HAVING?
CHICKEN, RICE, COLLARDS, AND-
POTATOES?
MMHM.
GROWL!

SHEILA? YOO-HOOOO!?
BOO?
YEEEK!
OH GOD... YOU SCARED ME, SAM.
I MEAN KELLY!

SAM?
SHEILA!
ER...
NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT... I MEAN, I'VE JUST BEEN TRAINING SO MUCH, YOU KNOW?
SIP
THEN YOU'RE READY TO DATE! THAT'S GOOD BECAUSE I BROUGHT A LIST!
LIST?


SOME THINK THAT FERRETS SMELL BAD, BUT THEY REALLY DON'T ONCE YOU'RE AROUND THEM LONG ENOUGH.
KELLY TELLS ME YOU LIKE SOLDIERS. I HAVE A COLLECTION OF VIETNAMESE HANDS UNDER GLASS AT HOME...
PANT
YOU GONNA FINISH THAT?
NOT ANYMORE.
PANT
CAN I CALL YOU WHITE CHOCOLATE?
WHAT? YOU DIDN'T LIKE HIM, EITHER?

HMMM.

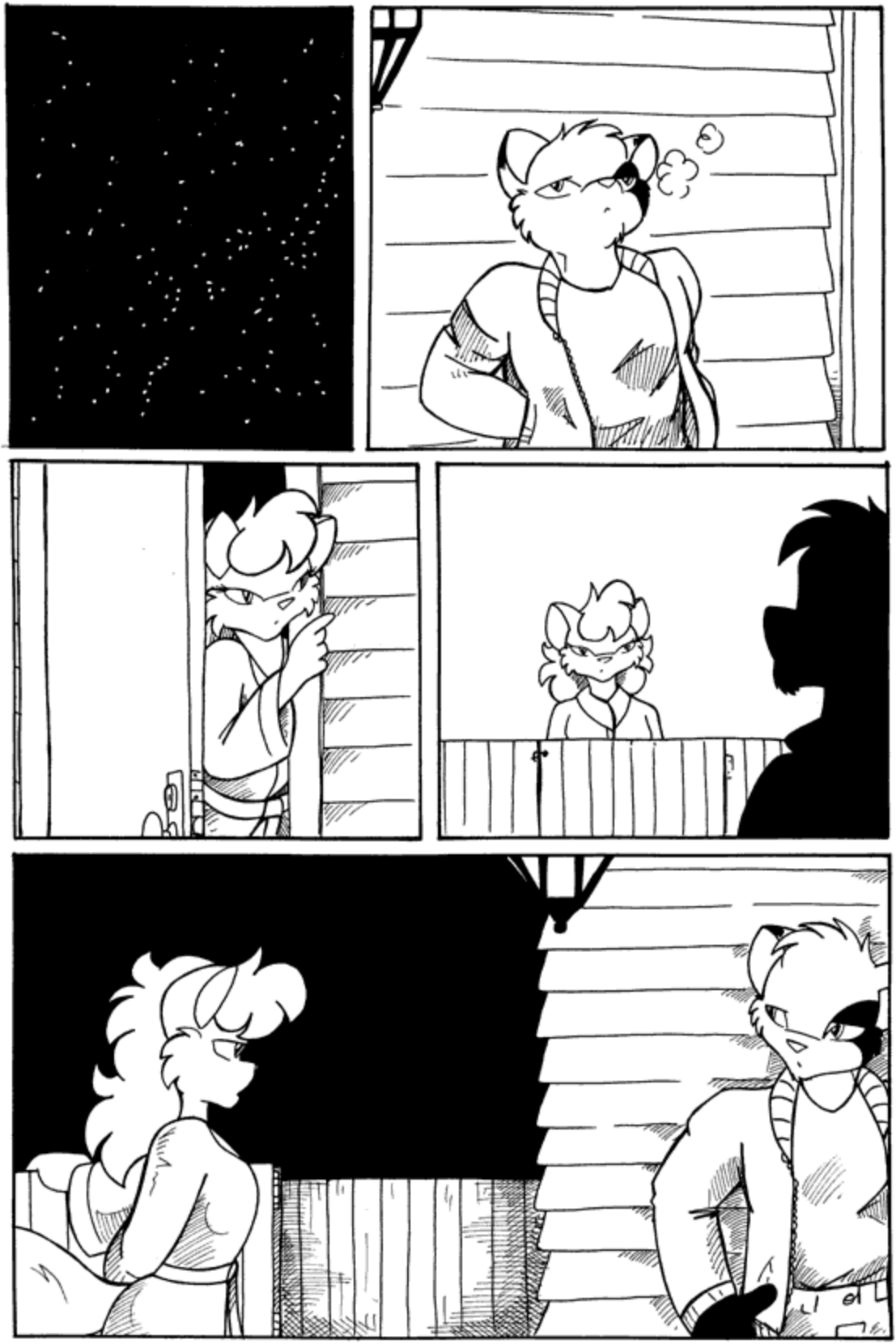
SAM? IT'S TWO IN THE MORNING. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HEY SHEILA. JUST HAVING A HARD TIME SLEEPING.
I HEARD YOU FIGHTING, TONIGHT.
YEAH, SORRY. IT'S BEEN A PRETTY BAD MONTH. IT'LL PROBABLY GET BETTER.
IT ALWAYS DOES. I JUST USUALLY NEED SOME TIME ALONE. TO THINK. TO CALM DOWN.
AS LONG AS I DON'T SAY OR DO ANYTHING RASH, IT'LL BE FINE.

THERE'S JUST SO MUCH THAT SETS HER OFF. I WALK ON EGG-SHELLS. SHE HATES MY JOB. SHE HATES MY HOURS.
WE DISAGREE ON HOW TO RAISE RYAN. SHE'S ACCUSED ME OF HAVING AFFAIRS.
BUT, WE HANG IN THERE FOR RYAN.
SHE'D KILL ME IF SHE KNEW I WAS UP AND TALKING TO YOU...
IN FACT, I SHOULD HEAD IN SOON, IN CASE SHE WAKES UP.
WELL, IF IT MATTERS TO YOU... I THINK YOU'RE A GOOD MAN AND A GOOD FATHER.

SKKK
I REALLY SHOULD GO. I'LL HAVE TO TALK TO YOU, LATER.

BLAM
BLAM
TIME?
YO! SAM!
OH, SHIT! SORRY JERRY. I SPACED...
BEEP!
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT, AGAIN.
YOU'VE BEEN SPACED ALL DAY. WHAT'S UP?

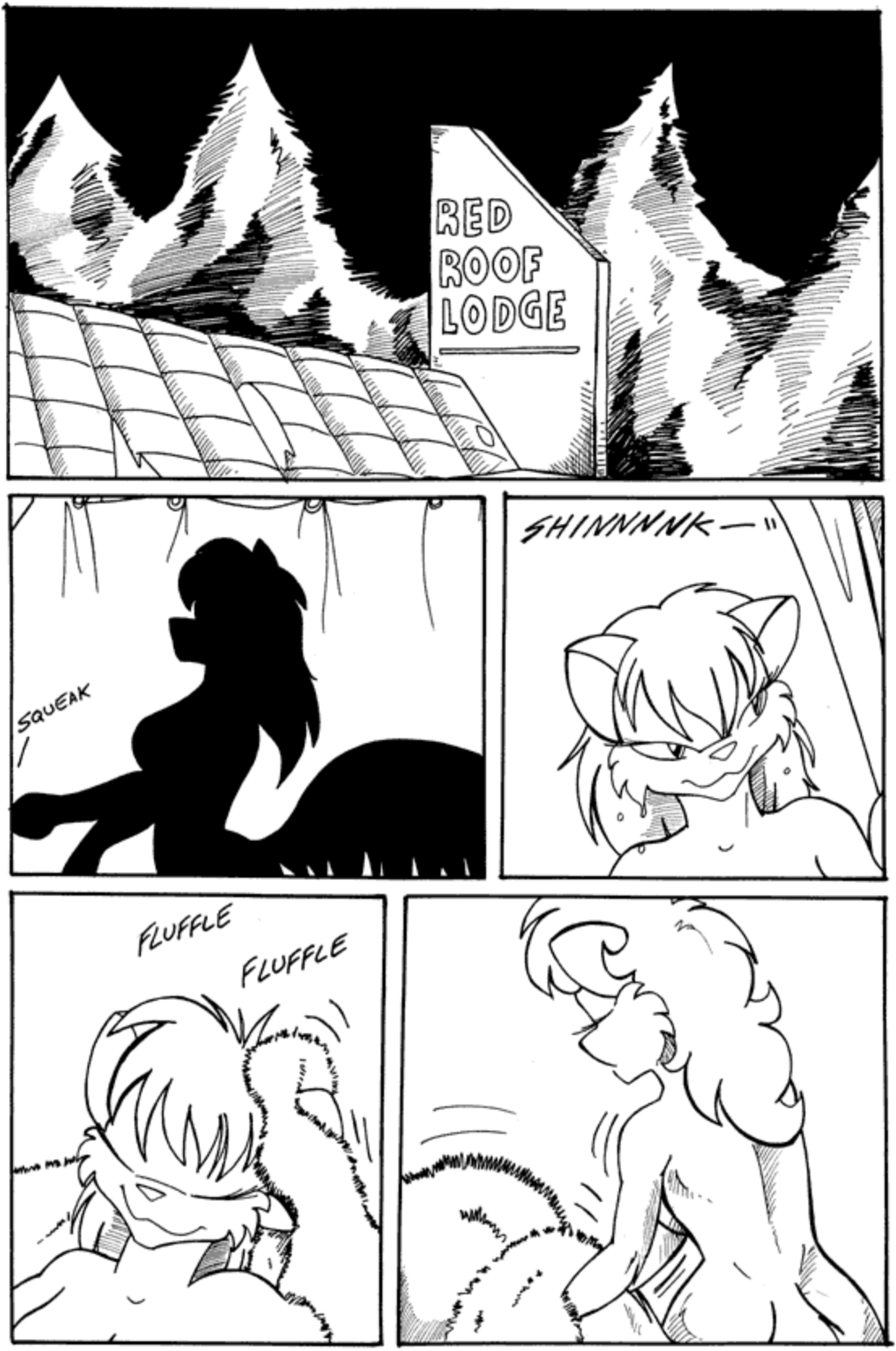
HOME TROUBLES?
CLUNK
I GUESS IT'S OBVIOUS. IT'S BEEN PRETTY BAD LATELY.
I'M GETTING TIRED OF IT, JERRY. IT'S GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE THE IRRATIONAL AND PARANOID DELUSIONS ARE THE NORM. I MISS THE AFFECTIONATE WOMAN I MARRIED.
I'M WONDERING IF THE SITUATION IS SALVAGEABLE.
WELL, WHATEVER YOU DO, KEEP RYAN IN MIND. YOUR KIDS ARE YOUR GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY. DON'T BLOW IT.



IT'S COLD OUT HERE.
SHEILA...
IF YOU NEED TO BE AWAY...
AT LEAST COME IN OUT OF THE COLD.

WHOA, SOMETHING SMELLS GOOD!
WHAT ARE YOU COOKING?
BREAKFAST!
MOM HASN'T MADE US BREAKFAST IN YEARS! SOMETHING'S GOTTEN INTO HER...
YOU'RE TELLING ME!

HEY, IT'S SNOWING OUTSIDE.
MMM. IT'S PRETTY.
FISK. HAVE YOU NOTICED A CHANGE IN MOM, LATELY?
SHE'S HAPPIER.
SHE WAS ASKING ME FOR OUTFIT ADVICE A FEW DAYS AGO.
SHE'S BEEN COOKING LIKE CRAZY! I SAW HER WITH RIBS THIS MORNING.
YOU NOTICE ANYTHING WRONG?
IF EATING LIKE THIS EVERY DAY IS WRONG, WHO WANTS TO BE RIGHT?


RED ROOF LODGE
SQUEAK
SHINNNK—"
FLUFFLE
FLUFFLE

LUCY, I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
DOES IT INVOLVE KNEEING YOU IN THE BALLS?
CAN YOU SLIP THIS NOTE TO CINDY IN YOUR GYM CLASS, TOMMOROW?
OOO! DOES MY BROTHER HAVE A CRUSH?
YES.
CAN YOU AT LEAST PRETEND TO BE EMBARASSED? FOR MY SAKE!?

LUCY, WHAT'S YOUR BROTHER DOING WITH YOUR WAGON?

THAT LOOKS SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE A PILE OF FRESH FORESKINS.
OH. MY. GOD.

FISK! WHERE DID YOU GET... THOSE!?
COOL, HUH?
NO.
THEY'RE JUST SHREDDED PIG SKINS I GOT FROM THE BUTCHER SHOP. I HEARD JENNY'S DAD COMPLAINING ABOUT LAWYERS, SO I'M GOING TO TELL HIM THESE ARE THEIR FORESKINS.
THOSE STRAY DOGS SURE LOOK IMPRESSED.
AH! DAMN! QUICK! RUN HOME AND GET MY BB GUN!
BARK!
BARK
RRRRRRR
ROWF!
GRRRRR!

BRRRRING!
HMPH... LET IT RING...
I CAN'T. IT MIGHT BE MY KIDS...

HELLO? HI, LUCY!

WHAT!? DOG ATTACK!?
HOSPITAL?!!

RABIES!?

FISK'S HAD ALL HIS SHOTS AS A PRECAUTION, AND THE LAD'S GOING TO BE FINE.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR. THIS YOUNG MAN'S IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.
WHAT'D I DO!?
LUCY TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR LITTLE HAIRBRAINED STUNT WITH A WAGON FULL OF PORK. YOU RUINED A VERY NICE EVENING FOR YOUR MOTHER, AND DON'T YOU LAY YOUR EARS AT ME WHEN I'M TALKING!
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, THOSE WERE THE FORESKINS OF SLAIN LAWYERS. I WAS ON MY WAY TO IMPRESS JENNY'S DAD WITH THEM WHEN I WAS AMBUSHED.
I CAN WRITE YOU A REFERAL TO A GOOD CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST...
GOD, YOU PEOPLE...

FISK, HONEY, I'M GOING TO SPEND THE DAY WITH FRIENDS. THERE'S SEVERAL PHONE NUMBERS ON THE FRIDGE IF YOU NEED ME.
OKAY, MOM.
WHERE'S LUCY?
STILL ASLEEP.
MUNCH
SAVE HER SOME CEREAL, OKAY?
SHAKE SHAKE

HEY, LUCY! I ATE ALL THE CEREAL, BUT I GOT YOU A PEAR AND HALF A POP-TART AND...
WHOA. YOU LOOK ROUGH.
I FEEL SICK.
SICK!? YOU CAN'T BE SICK! MOM'S GOING TO BE GONE ALL DAY!
LUCKY FOR YOU, I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR WHEN I GROW UP!
YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME.
KER-SNAP!!

I BET I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT DISEASE YOU HAVE, OTHER THAN JUST GIRL GERMS.
MWEH.
I THINK YOU MAY HAVE SYPHILIS.
WHAT'S THAT?
WHOA... MAYBE NOT.
GIMME THAT!

GOT SOME ORANGE JUICE?
YEAH, MOM. I GOT IT.
GO TO MY MEDICINE CABINET AND YOU SHOULD FIND SOME STORE BRAND DECONGESTANT.
WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?
THEY'RE RED CAPSULES.
I'VE GOT SOME INSIDE A LITTLE ROUND CALENDAR.
NO, HONEY. PUT THOSE BACK.
OKAY, GOT SOME.
GIVE HER ONE AND LET HER SLEEP. THEY'LL MAKE HER DROWSY.
OKAY.
FUCK.

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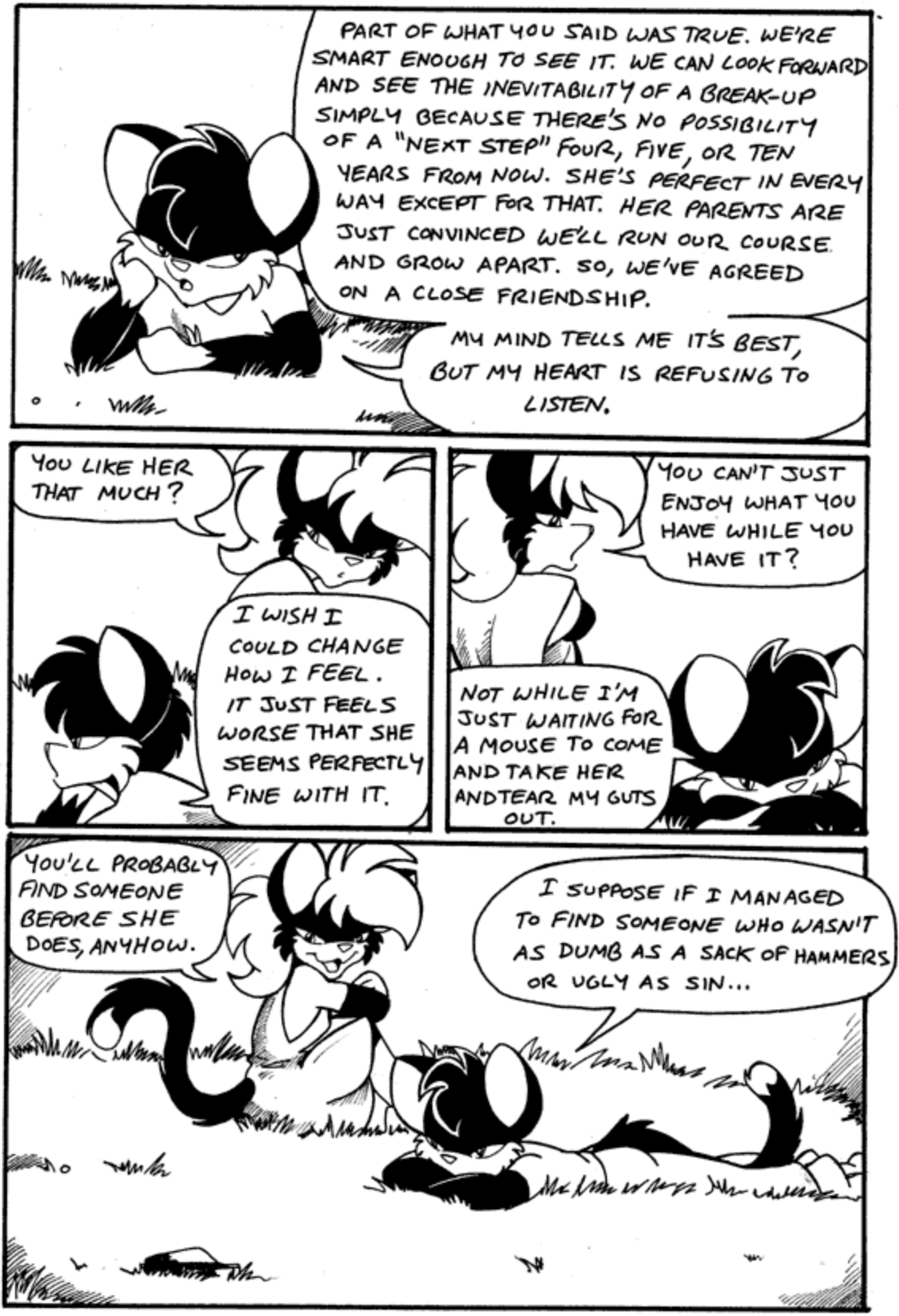
NO, HONEY. PUT THOSE BACK.
OKAY, GOT SOME.
GIVE HER ONE AND LET HER SLEEP. THEY'LL MAKE HER DROWSY.
OKAY.
FUCK.

I'M REALLY NOT GOOD WITH WORDS. I HAVE TO TRY AT LEAST... BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH. LUCY WANTED TO SET US UP, AND I GOT PRESSURED INTO IT.
BUT, THAT'S NOT ALL OF IT...
WHEN WE WERE TALKING IN THE HALLWAY, I REALIZED EVERYTHING I WAS SAYING WAS TRUE. MOST BOYS JUST LOOK FOR SOMETHING PRETTY. I GUESS I MAY HAVE GOTTEN BURNED OUT ON PURELY PHYSICAL GIRLS WHEN I WAS WITH NIKKI... I DIDN'T KNOW HOW NICE IT'D BE TO HAVE A GIRL AS A FRIEND.
I'M SORRY I LIED, INITIALLY. IF YOU WANT TO KEEP HATING ME, I'LL UNDERSTAND AND I'LL LET YOU BE. BUT, I HAVE TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I REALLY FELL FOR YOU... ... BEFORE I GO.

IS FISK JOINING US FOR DINNER, AGAIN?
I DIDN'T THINK SO. WHY DO YOU ASK?
I SAW HIM GO UPSTAIRS.
YES. HE WENT UPSTAIRS TO SPEAK TO ELIZABETH ABOUT SOMETHING.
YES, BUT I DIDN'T SEE HIM LEAVE.
HE'S BEEN UP THERE FOR FORTY MINUTES!
RIGHT. OKAY. I'LL GO CHECK.

THAT'S MY AUNT. SHE LIVES IN NEW YORK WITH AN APARTMENT FULL OF FERRETS AND A LITTLE WIMP FOR A HUSBAND. SHE HATES MY DAD.
I THINK A FAMILY THIS BIG WOULD BE MOSTLY EMBARASSING.
I THINK IT'S NICE TO HAVE HISTORY. THAT'S MY MOTHER'S FATHER. HE DIED FIGHTING THE EGYPTIANS.
YOUR DAD DIED FIGHTING, RIGHT? IF HE WERE ALIVE YOU'D BE MORE PROUD THAN EMBARASSED.
YOU KNOW... I HAVEN'T REALLY THOUGHT—
ELIZABETH?
DINNER'S ALMOST READY. FISK CAN JOIN US IF HE'D LIKE.
OKAY!

HOW'D IT GO?
IT WENT OKAY.
ARE YOU STILL GOING OUT?
WE'RE GOOD FRIENDS. "KISSING FRIENDS".
YOU DON'T SOUND HAPPY.
PLISH
PLISH
PLISH
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.

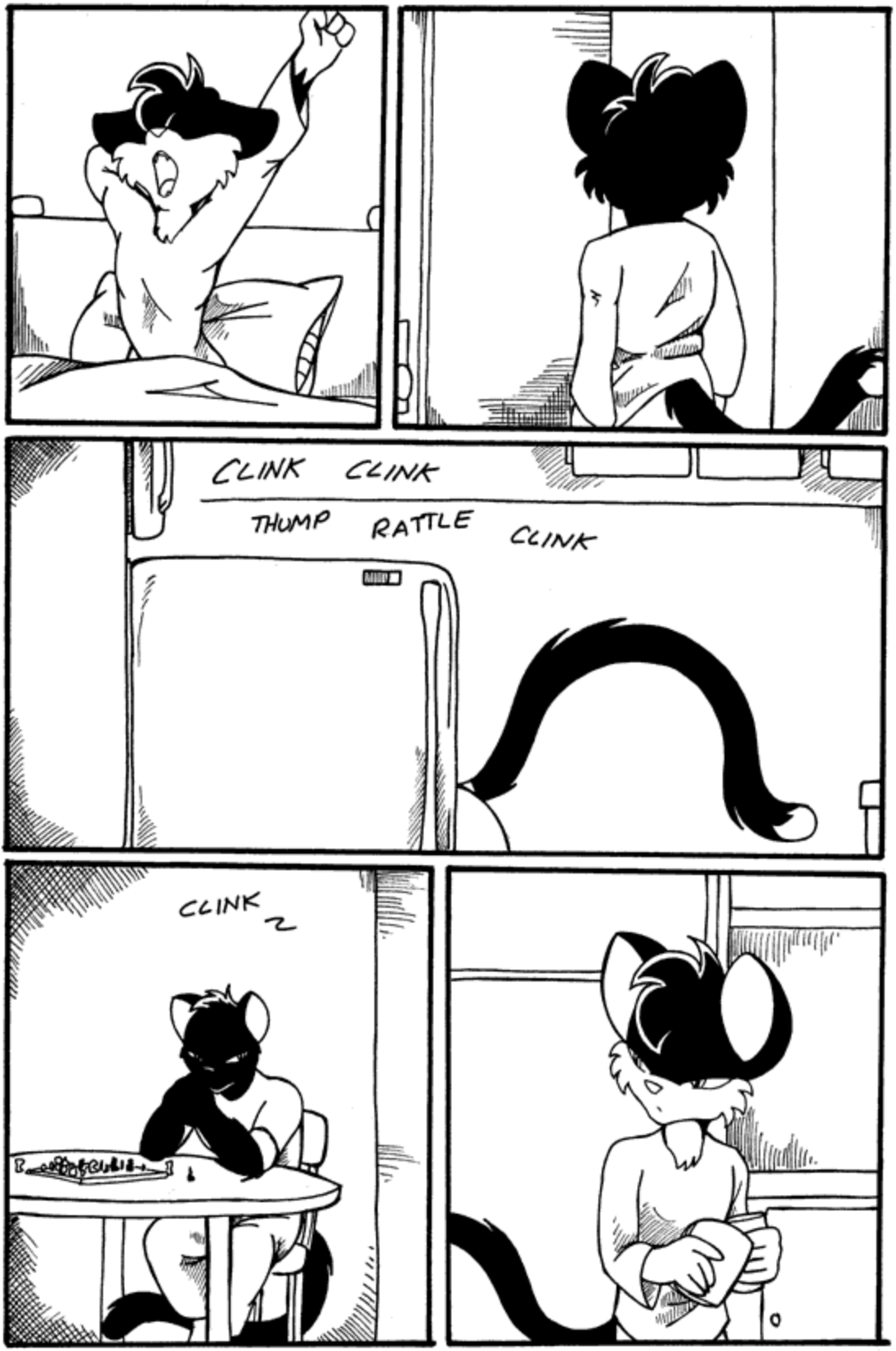

PART OF WHAT YOU SAID WAS TRUE. WE'RE SMART ENOUGH TO SEE IT. WE CAN LOOK FORWARD AND SEE THE INEVITABILITY OF A BREAK-UP SIMPLY BECAUSE THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF A "NEXT STEP" FOUR, FIVE, OR TEN YEARS FROM NOW. SHE'S PERFECT IN EVERY WAY EXCEPT FOR THAT. HER PARENTS ARE JUST CONVINCED WE'LL RUN OUR COURSE AND GROW APART. SO, WE'VE AGREED ON A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP.
MY MIND TELLS ME IT'S BEST, BUT MY HEART IS REFUSING TO LISTEN.
YOU LIKE HER THAT MUCH?
I WISH I COULD CHANGE HOW I FEEL. IT JUST FEELS WORSE THAT SHE SEEMS PERFECTLY FINE WITH IT.
YOU CAN'T JUST ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE WHILE YOU HAVE IT?
NOT WHILE I'M JUST WAITING FOR A MOUSE TO COME AND TAKE HER ANDTEAR MY GUTS OUT.
YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND SOMEONE BEFORE SHE DOES, ANYHOW.
I SUPPOSE IF I MANAGED TO FIND SOMEONE WHO WASN'T AS DUMB AS A SACK OF HAMMERS OR UGLY AS SIN...

SIGH...
END

WIRRRRRR
LOOK AT THIS MESS!
BEEP
BEEPLE
MY GRACIOUS!
PUT ON A SWEATER!
SCHLORP
THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE THE WRECK OF THE HESPERAS!

WIRRR
RRRR
...R
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE SPASTIC CLEANING, MOM?
WE'RE HAVING COMPANY.
WHO?
THE KELSOS ARE STOPPING OVER FOR THE NIGHT ON THEIR WAY TO FLORIDA.
WHO?
THEY'RE OLD FRIENDS OF MINE AND YOUR FATHER'S. THEY HELPED ME A LOT WHEN HE DIED.
OH. DO THEY SLEEP EARLY?
STUFF
STUFF
YES. THE STEREO WILL BE PLAYED AT A TOLERABLE LEVEL, PLEASE.
=SIGH= ALL RIGHT.
IF MADONNA'S HALF AS TALENTED AS YOU CLAIM, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY HER AT A REASONABLE, INDOOR VOLUME AS WELL.
FINE.

COME IN, YOU TWO! HOW WAS YOUR TRIP?
GLAD IT'S NEARLY OVER!
HOW ABOUT YOU, MM? DOING OKAY?
HANGING IN THERE, MIMI.
AND THE KITTENS? I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE THEY WERE THIS BIG.
GROWING LIKE WEEDS!
:GASP: IS THAT FISK? HE LOOKS JUST LIKE HIS FATHER!
?
I SURE REMEMBER THOSE EYES.


CLINK CLINK
THUMP RATTLE CLINK
CLINK 2

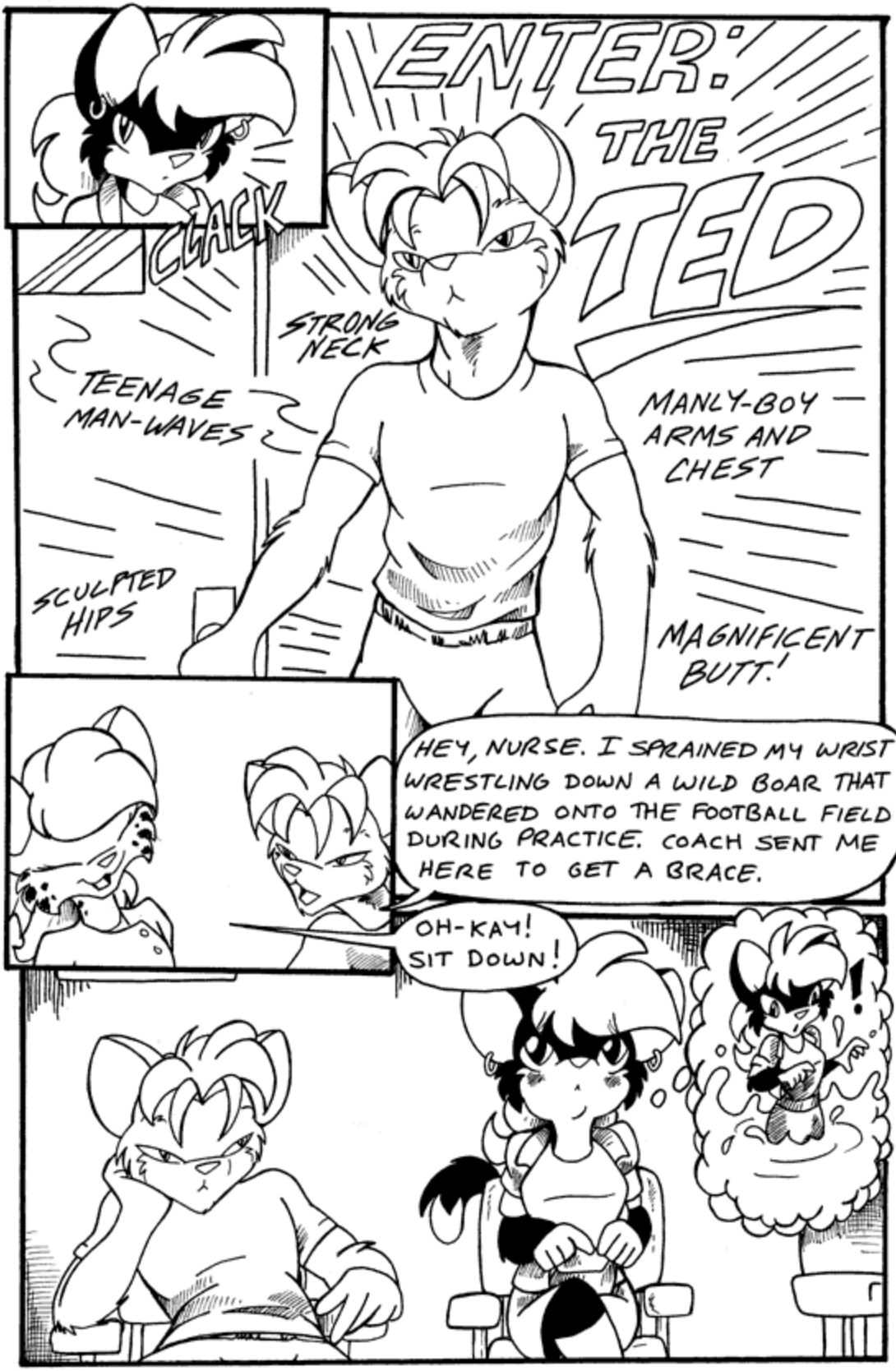
YOU PLAY CHESS BY YOURSELF?
WHEN THERE'S NO ONE ELSE AROUND.
I USED TO PLAY WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, BUT IT'S BEEN A FEW YEARS.
WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT TOO BUSY, PULL UP A CHAIR AND TAKE A SIDE? WE'LL SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.
OKAY. SURE. TURN THE BOARD. I'LL TAKE BLACK.

WHY'D YOU CHOOSE BLACK, FISK?
NOT SURE. IT ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS A SNEAKY COLOR
IT'S TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH EVIL, OR THE BAD SIDE OF A FIGHT.
I DON'T THINK THE BLACK PIECES SEE IT THAT WAY. I DON'T THINK ANY SIDE FIGHTS FOR WHAT THEY THINK IS WRONG. I THINK IT'S JUST A CLASH OF DIFFERENCES...
WHY CLASH, THEN?
...
I THINK WHEN IDEAS ENTER INTO COMPETITION, THEY HAVE TO RESOLVE DOMINANCE. I GUESS THE ONLY TRUELY "BAD" IDEA IS ONE THAT TAKES AWAY SELF DETERMINATION.
THAT'S A PRETTY STARTLING CONCLUSION FROM SUCH A YOUNG MAN, FISK. VERY INTERESTING.

MOM SAID YOU KNEW MY DAD DURING THE WAR.
THAT'S RIGHT. I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF HIM IF YOU KNEW HIM. IT REALLY TORE ME UP WHEN HE DIED.
WHAT WAS HE LIKE?
DEDICATED AND RELIABLE. HE WAS WILLING TO DIE TO GIVE YOU THE BEST LIFE POSSIBLE, EVEN IF HE WOULD NEVER LAY EYES ON YOU.
WAS IT WORTH IT?
WHAT'S THAT?
VIETNAM.
...
I'VE BEEN ALL OVER THE WORLD AND I'VE SEEN A LOT OF STRIFE. I SEE HOW PEOPLE LIVE IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND SO DID YOUR FATHER. OUTSIDE OF THE AMERICAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, WHEREVER WE RETREAT, WHEREVER WE DON'T EXTEND OUR PROTECTION, I'VE SEEN PEOPLE SUFFER. I LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE, HERE, WITH A NICE HOUSE, WARM SHEETS, PLENTY OF FOOD, NO FEAR OF SOCIETY CRUMBLING AROUND YOUR EARS. YOU HAVE A MOTHER AND A SISTER WHO LOVE YOU DEARLY, A FAMILY THAT SOME WOULD LOVE TO BE A PART OF. YOUR FATHER DIED TO SECURE THIS FOR YOU, FISK. IF HE HADN'T, SOMEONE ELSE'S FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD TO...

THE COLD WAR IS AN ELABORATE GAME OF CHESS. WE FIGHT OVER IMPORTANT SQUARES, AND FOR DOMINANCE OVER SQUARES WE DON'T OCCUPY. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST CASTLE YOUR KING WHILE YOUR ENEMIES MASS AGAINST YOU. WE FIGHT TO HOLD THEM, DISRUPT THEM, AND BLEED THEM OF RESOURCES IN THE HOPES THAT SOMEDAY YOU, OR YOUR CHILDREN, WILL NOT HAVE TO FACE THE THREAT OF COMMUNIST HEGEMONY.
SO, WAS VIETNAM WORTH IT?
WE LEARNED A LOT FROM THAT CONFLICT. WE'VE LEARNED THINGS THAT WILL ENSURE THEY'LL PAY DEARLY FOR THEIR VICTORY THERE. ONLY THE FUTURE WILL SHOW THE RESULTS OF OUR RESOLVE.
HOPEFULLY, IN THE END, WE'LL BE THE ONES SAYING...
"CHECKMATE"!
TOK
DANG!
THAT WAS A GOOD GAME, FISK. YOU'LL MAKE A GOOD CHESS PLAYER, SOME DAY.
END

SPRAYBERR
HIGH SCHOO
NURSE
HAVE A SEAT, LUCY. YOUR MOTHER SHOULD BE HERE ANY MOMENT.
OKAY.


ENTER: THE TED
CLACK
STRONG NECK
TEENAGE MAN-WAVES
MANLY-BOY ARMS AND CHEST
SCULPTED HIPS
MAGNIFICENT BUTT!
HEY, NURSE. I SPRAINED MY WRIST WRESTLING DOWN A WILD BOAR THAT WANDERED ONTO THE FOOTBALL FIELD DURING PRACTICE. COACH SENT ME HERE TO GET A BRACE.
OH-KAY! SIT DOWN!
!

READY TO GO, LUCY?
I GUESS.
WHO WAS THAT WOMAN?
SIT DOWN!

IS THIS HER FIRST EXAM?
YES.
HAVE A SEAT AND WE'LL CALL YOU IN A MOMENT.
WHAT'S THIS DOCTOR LIKE?
CALM AND NICE. PLUS, SHE'S A WOMAN, WHICH SHOULD BE LESS CREEPY FOR YOU.
COME ON BACK, LUCY. WE'RE READY.
GLUG GLUG
LAP LAP

WHY AM I GOING ON THE PILL? I'M NOT HAVING SEX.
I WANT YOU TO GET USED TO THE ROUTINE, NOW.
THIS IS EMBARASSING.
MY SISTER HAD A SCARE WHEN I WAS GROWING UP. NOW, THAT'S EMBARASSING.
YOU SEE, LITTLE BOYS SPREAD STRESS AND MISERY, WHILE LITTLE GIRLS GATHER IT FROM FAR AND WIDE AND BRING IT RIGHT HOME.
WE'RE NOT KILLING UNBORN KITTENS IN THIS FAMILY, AND I DON'T WANT GRANDKITTENS UNTIL I'M AT LEAST FORTY-FIVE.
AREN'T THESE KIND OF LIKE GIVING ME PERMISSION TO HAVE SEX?
WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU ASKED FOR MY PERMISSION TO DO SOMETHING STUPID?
OH.

HEY, FANG. YOU KNOW LUCY BLACK?
YEAH.
I'VE GOT A PLAN. I'M GOING TO ASK HER OUT THIS FRIDAY.
BUT ISN'T SHE A FRESHMAN?
YES, BUT DID YOU SEE HER MOTHER? HOLY SHIT!
SHE'S PERFECT! A PORCELAIN WHITE GODDESS WITH AN ASS TO DIE FOR!
DON'T GET SO CLOSE WITHOUT PANTS.
YOU'RE GOING TO GO OUT WITH A GIRL TO GET AT HER MOTHER? SHE'S A GROWN WOMAN, DUDE.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND WOMEN, FANG. FORBIDDEN ROMANCE IS BIG WITH THEM. I THINK IF I PLAY THINGS RIGHT, I HAVE A CHANCE.

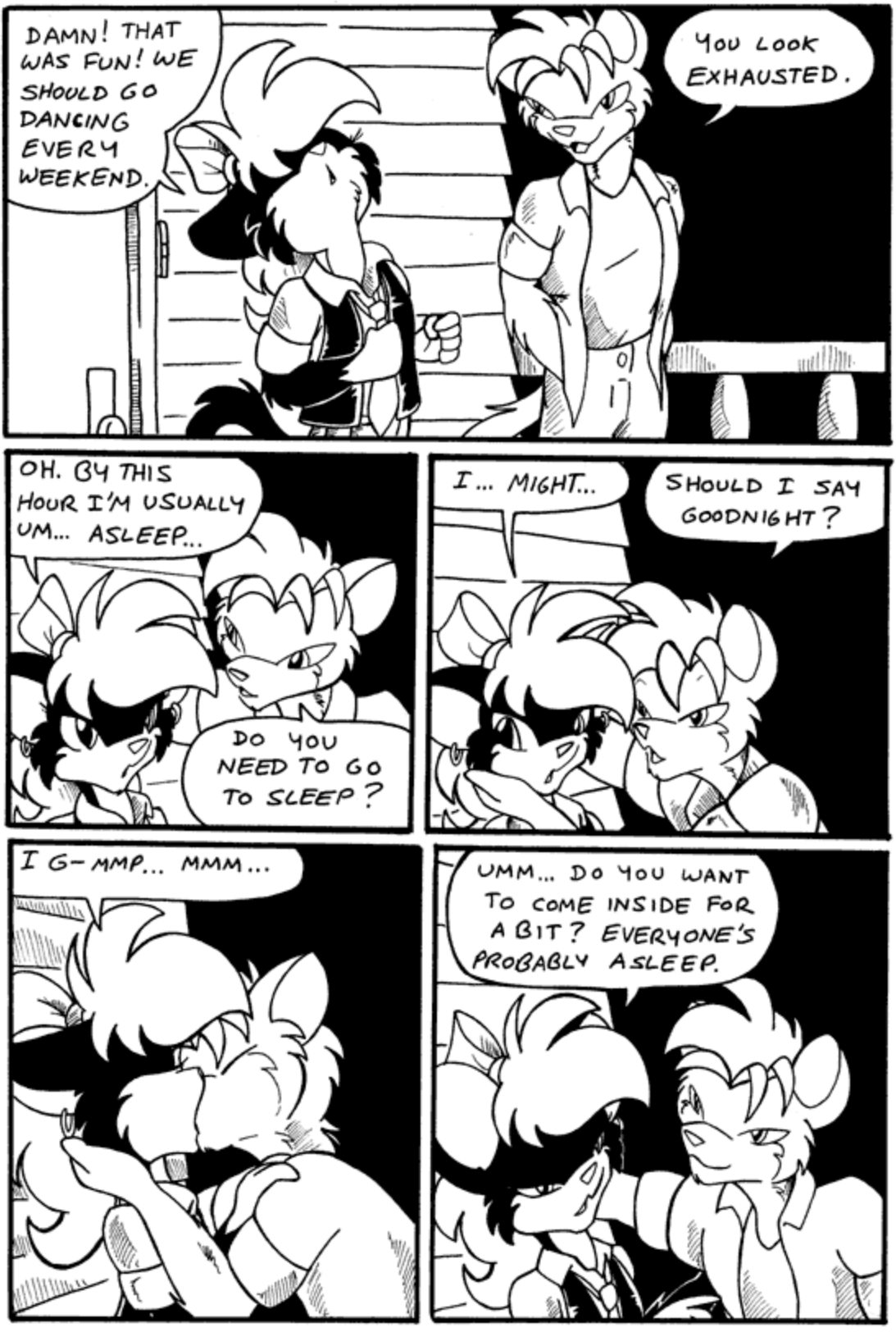
BRRIIING!
HELLO?
HELLO. IS LUCY AVAILABLE?
SHE'S IN THE SHOWER RIGHT NOW.
AH. WELL, COULD YOU TELL HER TED STEPHENS CALLED.
YOU SOUND CLOSE TO RAY STEVENS. ARE YOU RELATED?
NO, DUDE. JUST TELL HER—
YOU CALLED, RIGHT, RAY STEVENS. SHOULD SHE CALL YOU BACK?
SURE, LET ME GIVE YOU MY NUMBER...
WAIT... DID YOU SAY I WAS RAY STEVENS?
NO, TED STEPHENS. WITH A "V"?
NO NO. A "PH"... WAIT, WHAT'S IT MATTER?
NEVERMIND. JUST LET ME HAVE YOUR NUMBER, RAY, AND I'LL GIVE IT TO HER WHEN SHE GETS OUT.
DUDE...

ONLY WHEN I'M DANCIN' CAN I FEEL THIS FREEEE
WIGGLE
SHAKE
SLIIIIIIIDE
BUMP!
AT NIGHT I LOCK THE DOORS, WHERE NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE-EE
I'M TIRED OF DANCIN' HERE ALL BY MY SE-ELF
CLICK
BUMP!
TO-NIGHT I WANNA DANCE WITH SOME-ONE-ELSE
YEEEK!
FISK! DON'T YOU KNOCK!?
YEAH, I DID.

LET ME GET MY BRITCHES ON!
TED STEPHENS CALLED.
UFF!
TED!? WHEN!?
WHEN YOU WERE IN THE SHOWER.
TED? THE MOST GORGEOUS CAT IN SCHOOL TED?
JUST CALL HIM, OKAY. I PUT HIS NUMBER NEXT TO THE PHONE.
I CAN'T JUST CALL HIM... I'LL LOOK DESPERATE.

DINNER'S ALMOST READY! IT'S FRIED CHICKEN!
OH! I'M GOING OUT, TONIGHT.
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME. DO YOU NEED A RIDE?
NO. HE HAS A CAR.
WHAT? WHO HAS A CAR?
A GUY FROM SCHOOL...
OW!
WHOOOOOO?

SORRY IT TOOK A WHILE. MY MOTHER WAS SPAZZING A LITTLE.
OH?
BECAUSE YOU'RE SIXTEEN. SHE'S GOT THIS WHOLE PARANOID OUTLOOK ABOUT ME.
FFT. MY BROTHER COULD GO OUT WITH A GAY MONKEY AND SHE WOULDN'T CARE.
SHE USED TO DATE GUYS ALL THE TIME WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER.
OH HO! REALLY?


DAMN! THAT WAS FUN! WE SHOULD GO DANCING EVERY WEEKEND.
YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED.
OH. BY THIS HOUR I'M USUALLY UM... ASLEEP...
DO YOU NEED TO GO TO SLEEP?
I... MIGHT...
SHOULD I SAY GOODNIGHT?
I G-MMP... MMM...
UMM... DO YOU WANT TO COME INSIDE FOR A BIT? EVERYONE'S PROBABLY ASLEEP.

zzZZzz...
MMMM HMM-MM
CLICK!

SQUEAK!
CLIK!
BLINK
!
SHHHH
HHHHH
HMM-
MMM
SHHHHHHHHHHH
SQUEAK!

ZZMMZZ...
OOOOOOO... MROWWWL... MM ...OHHH, TED...
PINCH
PINCH PINCH
OH YEAH, BABY. TAKE THAT PERKY BUTT INTO THE KITCHEN AND FIX ME A HAM SANDWICH.
AAAGH!
F*CK!
SHIT! FUCK! WHAT?

IT'S NOT FUNNY, YOU LITTLE ASSHOLE!
THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE WAS!
TED! SORRY! I FELL ASLEEP.
OH, IT'S OKAY. I WAS UPSTAIRS LOOKING FOR THE BATHROOM.
HEE...
WHEW...
FISK WAS JUST BEING A JUVENILE DICK.
FISK'S GOING TO BED.

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT, FANG.
MMM.
LUCY'S GOING TO A SLUMBER PARTY TONIGHT. HER BROTHER'S SPENDING THE NIGHT WITH HIS FRIENDS...
SHEILA BLACK WILL BE ALL ALONE WHEN I SHOW UP TO LAY ON THE BOYISH CHARM.
HOW DO I LOOK?
HOMOSEXUAL.
OH, FUCK YOU. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WOMEN, ANYWAY.

AHHH...
DING DONG
CLINK
WHO IN THE-
OH! OH MY...
HEE!

OH DEAR! TED!
DON'T YOU JUST LOOK CHARMING!
BUT LUCY'S OVER AT ELIZABETH'S HOUSE, TONIGHT. SHE'S JUST TWO HOUSES DOWN IF YOU WANT TO IMPRESS HER.
OH I SEE. MISS BLACK, IT'S NOT EASY FOR ME TO TELL YOU HOW GRATEFUL I AM FOR YOU ALLOWING LUCY TO GO OUT WITH ME.
YOU'RE AN AWESOME, STRONG WOMAN AND I THINK LUCY IS LUCKY TO HAVE YOU AS A MOTHER.
I THINK YOU DESERVE THESE, SHEILA.
OH!
SO, I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW MY APPRECIATION BY TREATING YOU TO DINNER, SOMETIME.

MMM.
DINNER WITH LUCY AND I? THAT'S AN AMAZING GESTURE, TED.
I... HAD MY HEART ON SPEAKING WITH YOU OVER DINNER... ALONE PERHAPS.
ALONE? IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT ON YOUR MIND, TED?
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE YOUNG AND UNSURE... IT'S HARD TO EXPRESS HOW I FEEL...
TED... ARE YOU ASKING ME OUT ON A DATE?
OH!
OH, YEAH.

TED, YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BE A BAD MOTHER. I RAISED LUCY AGAINST A LOT OF TOUGH ODDS. I BUILT A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER AND SHE TRUSTS ME AS SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN THROUGH LIFE AHEAD OF HER AND IS LOOKING OUT FOR HER...
YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BETRAY HER FOR A DATE WITH HER BOYFRIEND AND A CHANCE AT SOME SIXTEEN YEAR OLD PIECE OF DICK!?
W—
...YEAH?
GET OFF MY PROPERTY!

WHAT THE HELL!? HOW COULD YOU DO S-SOMETHING SO SICK AND SLIMY!!? JESUS T-TED!
CHRIST, I DON'T NEED ALL THIS EMOTIONAL BULLSHIT, RIGHT NOW!
YOU THINK I'M AFRAID OF YOU GETTING UPSET!?
FRESHMAN BITCHES LIKE YOU ARE A DIME PER DOZEN. NOW GET OFF MY CASE.
!
END

SOB!
YEESH.
WIMPER...
...
SOBBB!
CHOKE
THUMP
THUMP

LUCY?
WHAT?
YOU SOUNDED TERRIBLE.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SOUND, FISK?
WELL, AT LEAST YOU ONLY WENT OUT ON ONE DATE...
THAT'S NOT THE POINT! HE MADE ME FEEL LIKE A NOBODY! LIKE I WAS N-NOTHING BUT A WORTHLESS FLECK OF SHIT TO BE FLICKED ASIDE!
HAS ANYBODY EVER MADE YOU FEEL LIKE THAT!?

I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE OUT WITH HIM! SICK JOCK FUCKER... HOW CAN A GUY BE THAT WAY...
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT. I'M JUST A DIME PER DOZEN. ANOTHER STUPID GIRL WHO'LL DO ANYTHING.
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER DUMB GIRL. I ONLY HAVE ONE TWIN, YOU KNOW.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
WHAT I MEAN IS NO ONE EXPECTS YOU TO BE PERFECT OR HAVE FLAWLESS JUDGEMENT. BUT YOU'RE NOT JUST ANY GIRL. YOU'RE MY SISTER, AND I THINK I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN SOME FUCKING JOCK.
I HATE TO SEE YOU LIKE THIS. EVER SINCE YOU ALMOST DIED WHEN WE WERE NINE I'VE FELT MORE LIKE YOUR OLDER BROTHER THAN YOUR TWIN.
I THINK TED KNOWS HOW BADLY HE HURT YOU, BUT SOMETIMES OUR PRIDE IS TOUGHER THAN OUR SENSE OF HONOR. YOU'LL GET OVER ALL THIS IN TIME AND YOU'LL BE A BETTER JUDGE OF OTHERS AS A RESULT.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP YOU FEEL BETTER UNTIL THEN, THOUGH.
YOU WILL?
WILL YOU GO SHOPPING WITH ME, TOMMOROW?

HOW DOES THE MALL HELP?
MALLS ARE MAGICAL. THEY'RE BIG BUFFETS OF SHOPPING THERAPY.
WOULDN'T YOU RATHER GO SHOPPING WITH ELIZABETH?
NO. SHE'S NOT A GUY.
I NEED A NEW SET OF OUTFITS. NOTHING'S MORE HEALING THAN FEELING BEAUTIFUL AND WANTED. YOU'RE A GUY, SO YOU KNOW WHAT GUYS LIKE. I NEED YOUR INPUT.
I LOVE ELIZABETH AS A DEAR FRIEND, BUT HER CHOICE IN CLOTHING IS JUST... WELL... SO NOT ME.
GUYS LOVE GIRLS WHO PLAY ARCADE GAMES.
COME ON...

THIS IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO START.
NO, I'M NOT A 'PROSTITUTE' Boutique
OUTSTANDING.
YOU CAN TELL THESE ARE QUALITY CLOTHES BY THE PRICES.
THIS ONE HAS RIPS IN IT. IF I WORE IT, YOU COULD SEE MY BRA.
DO YOU THINK A BLACK BRA WOULD LOOK BETTER UNDER IT? BECAUSE IF SO I'D HAVE TO BUY ONE. FISK?
OH CHRIST, FISK.

HOW'S THIS?
COACH
CUTE.
MAYBE THIS IS TOO SLUTTY.
TRYING TOO HARD.
RAR?
WORDS FAIL ME.
I THINK YOU SHOULD WEAR THE OTHER ONE.
WHAT OTHER ONE?
YOU KNOW THE ONE.
NO.
WEAR IT.
FIIIIISK...
YOU'RE SUCH A PERV.
OH YES. PUT ON THAT POUTY FACE.
JUST LIKE THAT.

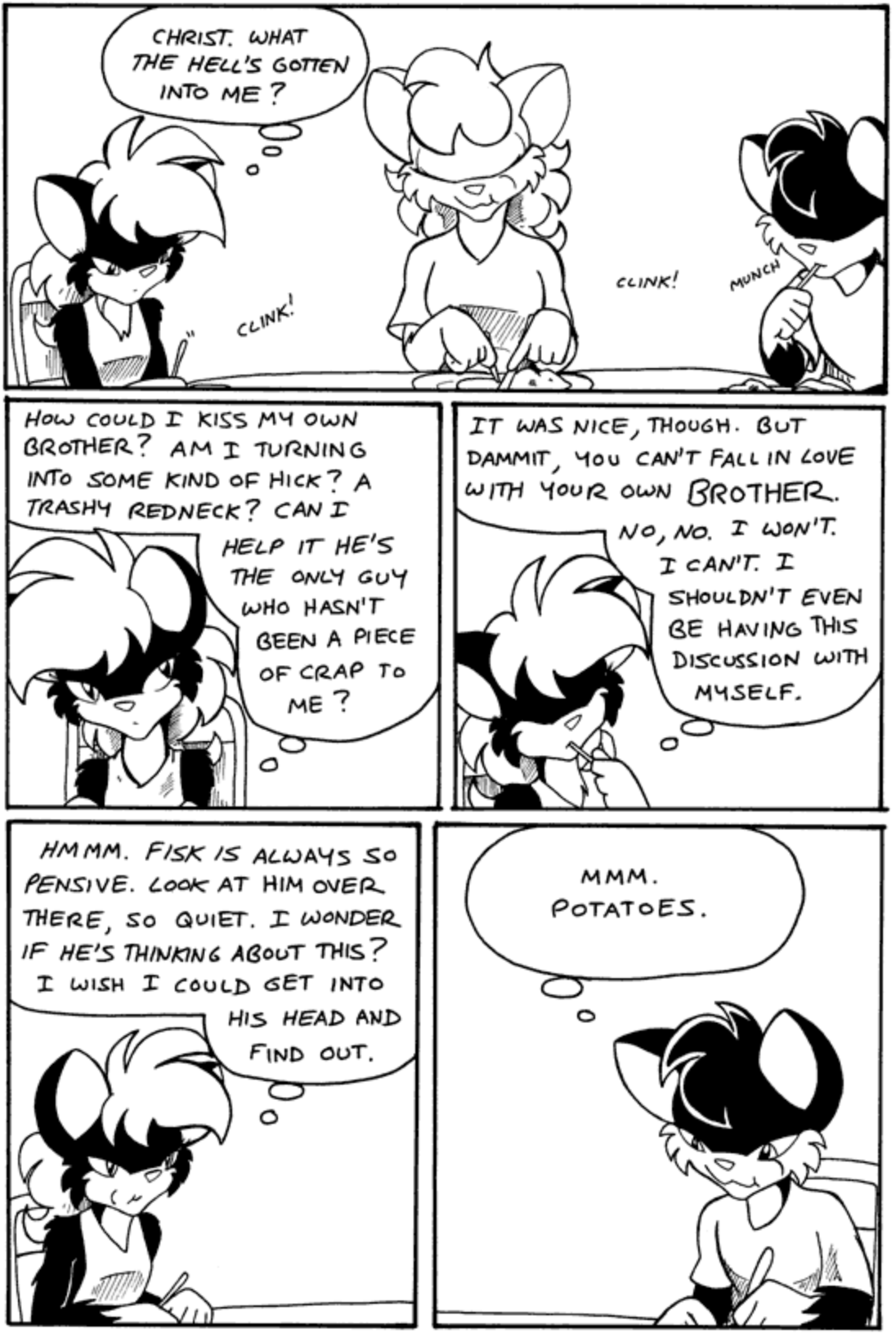
HOW'D YOU AFFORD ALL THAT ON YOUR ALLOWANCE?
WELL, FISK HELPED A LITTLE. HE THOUGHT I NEEDED IT MORE THAN HE DID.
AWWW! WHAT A LITTLE HERO!
YEAH.
WHAT... IS THIS?
UM. THONG UNDERWEAR.
SO PEOPLE DON'T SEE PANTY LINES ON MY BUTT WHEN I WEAR TIGHT SKIRTS.
TIGHT SKIRTS!?

FISK DID THAT?! WHAT AN AWESOME BROTHER!
I GUESS.
WE CAN'T EVEN GET MY BROTHER TO DO THE DISHES WHEN IT'S HIS TURN.
YOUR BROTHER'S SUCH A SWEET GUY!
IT'S TOO BAD HE'S NOT A MOUSE.
YEAH. THAT'S TOO BAD.

FISK. DO YOU EVER MISS BEING WITH ELIZABETH?
MM? OF COURSE I DO.
CLICK CLICKITY
WHY HAVEN'T YOU PURSUED ANOTHER GIRLFRIEND?
CLICK
I DON'T FEEL LIKE I FIT IN WITH ANYBODY. THINGS ARE JUST UNCOMFORTABLE. I DON'T WANT TO PLAY THE "IMPRESS ME" GAME, OR COMPETE WITH GUYS WHO LOOK LIKE TED.
EVERY-THING I TRY TO PURSUE FALLS APART. I GUESS I'M JUST TIRED OF IT.
I COULD HOOK YOU UP WITH SOMEONE WHO SEEMS NICE.
LUCY, I DON'T TRUST ANYONE WHO JUST SEEMS NICE.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO EVER BE HAPPY IF YOU DON'T TRUST ANYONE?
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN...
YOU TRUST ME AT LEAST, RIGHT?
OF COURSE I TRUST MY SISTER.

I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID THAT...
IT'S OKAY.
IT'S JUST-
KIDS! DINNER'S READY!


CHRIST. WHAT THE HELL'S GOTTEN INTO ME?
CLINK!
CLINK!
MUNCH
HOW COULD I KISS MY OWN BROTHER? AM I TURNING INTO SOME KIND OF HICK? A TRASHY REDNECK? CAN I HELP IT HE'S THE ONLY GUY WHO HASN'T BEEN A PIECE OF CRAP TO ME?
IT WAS NICE, THOUGH. BUT DAMMIT, YOU CAN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR OWN BROTHER.
NO, NO. I WON'T. I CAN'T. I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HAVING THIS DISCUSSION WITH MYSELF.
HMMM. FISK IS ALWAYS SO PENSIVE. LOOK AT HIM OVER THERE, SO QUIET. I WONDER IF HE'S THINKING ABOUT THIS? I WISH I COULD GET INTO HIS HEAD AND FIND OUT.
MMM. POTATOES.

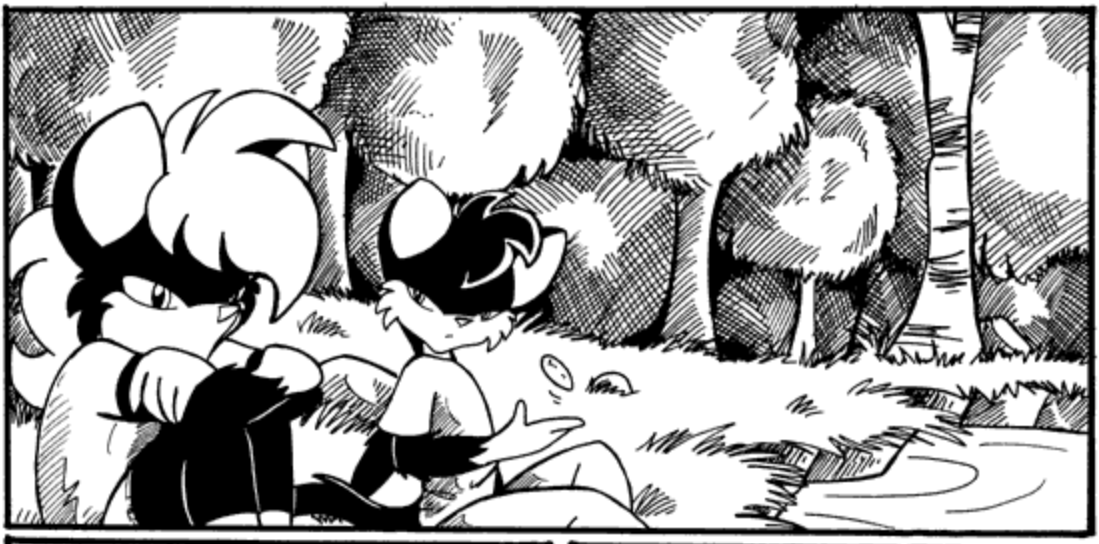
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M STILL THINKING ABOUT TED.
AT LEAST TOMMOROW'S SUNDAY. SO WHO CARES IF I CAN'T SLEEP.
I NEED SOMEONE TO HOLD. HOW AM I EVER GOING TO TRUST ANOTHER GUY FOR THAT THOUGH...
MAYBE I CAN GO TALK TO FISK, AGAIN. HE'S PROBABLY TRYING TO SLEEP.
I'VE BEEN TAKING A LOT OF HIS TIME, THOUGH. I HATE TO IMPOSE SO MUCH.

GO AHEAD. SLIP OFF TO FISK'S ROOM. YOU KNOW HOW THAT TURNED OUT THE LAST TIME.
THAT'S NOT WHY SHE WANTS TO GO! LUCY JUST NEEDS TO KNOW SOMEONE CARES!
SHE'S THOUGHT ABOUT IT! NO DENYING!
SO WILL A HEADACHE BUT WE STILL TAKE ASPIRIN!
LIVE A LITTLE!
SHE'S STILL IN PAIN! THOSE THOUGHTS WILL FADE.
MAKING OUT IS WAY DIFFERENT FROM ASPIRIN!
NOT WITH HER BROTHER!
POOF!
WHAT WILL BE IS WHAT SHE WILL KNOW HAS BEEN DONE.
WHAT?
SHAH..
COP OUT.

CLIK!
CLIK
I WAS LONELY.
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE.

TWEET
BLINK
ZZMMZZM
S
!
ZZMMZZRRWW.
?
GASP
GZZZZZM

NNF...?
SCOOTCH
SNUG
GOOD MORNING.
OH!
MMM...
NUZ
I'M GOING BACK TO MY ROOM BEFORE MOM WAKES UP.

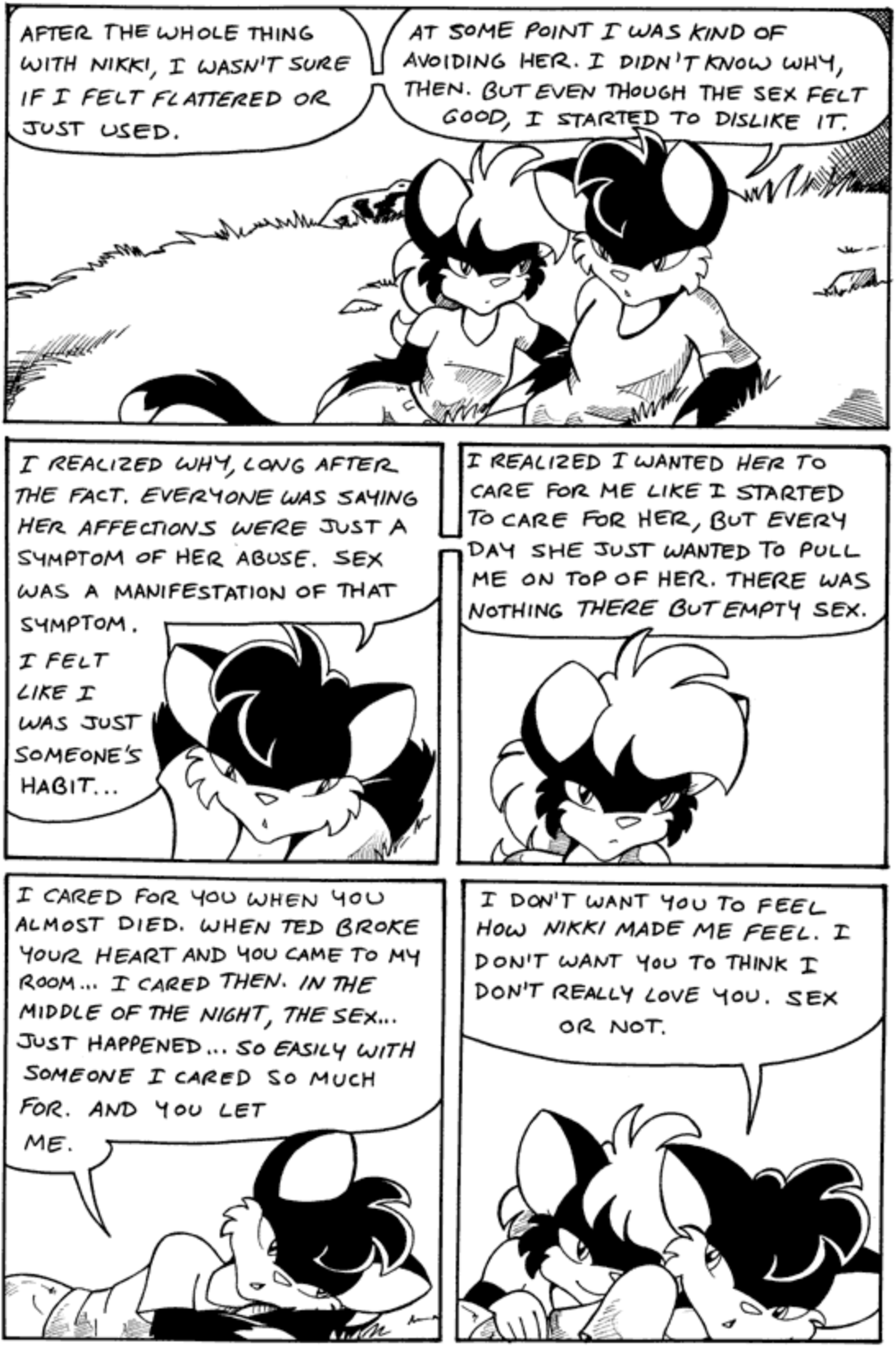


THAT WAS WRONG, HUH?

WRONG BY US?
SWING

I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS IT FEELS THAT WAY. WE DID SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE TO KEEP A SECRET.

WHAT KIND OF FEELINGS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME? EVEN IF I WASN'T YOUR SISTER?


AFTER THE WHOLE THING WITH NIKKI, I WASN'T SURE IF I FELT FLATTERED OR JUST USED.
AT SOME POINT I WAS KIND OF AVOIDING HER. I DIDN'T KNOW WHY, THEN. BUT EVEN THOUGH THE SEX FELT GOOD, I STARTED TO DISLIKE IT.
I REALIZED WHY, LONG AFTER THE FACT. EVERYONE WAS SAYING HER AFFECTIONS WERE JUST A SYMPTOM OF HER ABUSE. SEX WAS A MANIFESTATION OF THAT SYMPTOM.
I FELT LIKE I WAS JUST SOMEONE'S HABIT...
I REALIZED I WANTED HER TO CARE FOR ME LIKE I STARTED TO CARE FOR HER, BUT EVERY DAY SHE JUST WANTED TO PULL ME ON TOP OF HER. THERE WAS NOTHING THERE BUT EMPTY SEX.
I CARED FOR YOU WHEN YOU ALMOST DIED. WHEN TED BROKE YOUR HEART AND YOU CAME TO MY ROOM... I CARED THEN. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, THE SEX... JUST HAPPENED... SO EASILY WITH SOMEONE I CARED SO MUCH FOR. AND YOU LET ME.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL HOW NIKKI MADE ME FEEL. I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK I DON'T REALLY LOVE YOU. SEX OR NOT.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, FISK. THIS IS OUR LAST SESSION UNLESS THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE GOING ON YOU'D LIKE TO DISCUSS.
NO. I GUESS I'M FINE. THANK YOU MRS. HOLLINGS.
THE END

WUM
WUM WUM
WUM
WUM
WUM
OFF BALLANCE!
BAM
BAM
BAM
!
FEDERAL EXPRESS
SQUIRRRRP...
BRAWNY PAPER TOWELS... FOR THOSE EXTRA SLOPPY WET MESSES THAT NEED BRAWNY'S MANLY TOUCH...
OH YEAH, USE HIM LIKE A CHEAP RAG YOU FILTHY WHORE.
BLUE BELL

MMM.
GNARMM.
MUNCH
MOM. MY FAVORITE SHIRT HAS A RIP IN THE HE-
CHRIST BOY! GO PUT ON YOUR DAMNED SHIRT! THIS IS A HOUSEHOLD, NOT A BROTHEL!
DON'T GO DOWNSTAIRS. I THINK AUNT FLOW IS IN TOWN.

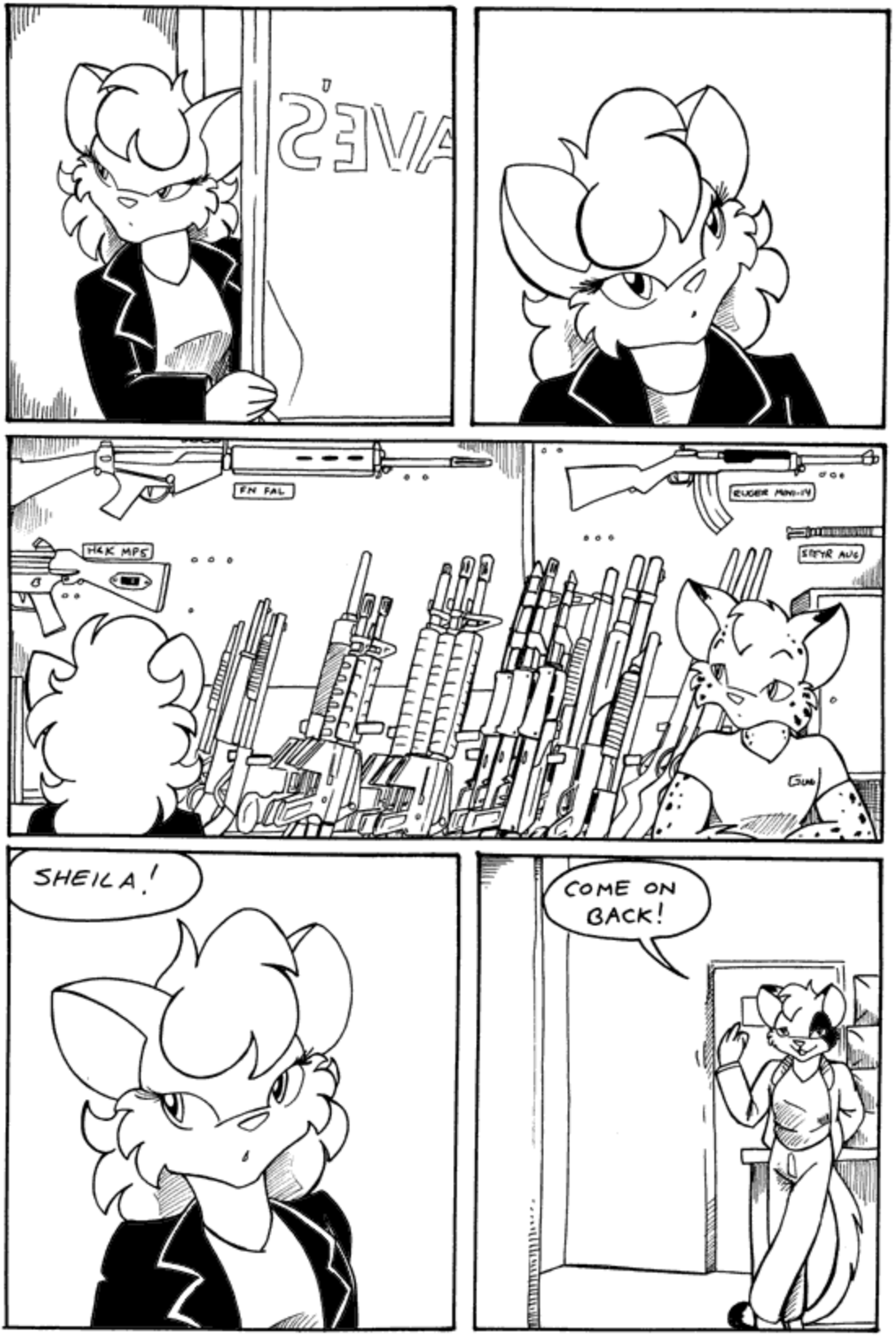
I THINK I'M LOSING MY MIND, KELLY.
OH?
I'M SO TENSE. I YELLED AT FISK YESTERDAY, FOR HARDLY ANY REASON.
YOU SPEND ALL DAY IN THAT HOUSE, LATELY. I KNOW I'D GET A BAD CASE OF CABIN FEVER.
MAYBE YOU NEED A VACATION?
OR A MAN.
OH! SINCE YOU PUT IT THAT WAY! HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN, DEAR?
SINCE HARVE...
OH MY GOD!

ARE YOU NERVOUS ABOUT DATING AGAIN?
SORT OF. I GUESS I'M AFRAID THE INVESTMENT WON'T YEILD A GOOD RETURN, YOU KNOW?
I'M NOT YOUNG ANYMORE. EVERY YEAR IT GETS A LITTLE HARDER TO STAY IN SHAPE. I CAN'T WASTE TIME FROM MAN TO MAN.
AND WHAT IF ONE OF THEM TURNS OUT TO BE... YOU KNOW...
A CREEP.
I KNOW A FEW TRUSTWORTHY BACHELORS. LETS GET YOU HOOKED UP!
OH...

IF YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT THE "CREEPS" YOU CAN LOOK INTO SELF DEFENSE COURSES, MARTIAL ARTS, MAYBE A GUN FOR THE HOME...
WHO'S GOING TO TRAIN SOME HOMEBOUND MOTHER?
WHY DON'T YOU ASK SAM?
SAM?
SAMUEL TOBS, YOUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR? HE TRAINS COBB COUNTY POLICE.
HE'S GOOD FRIENDS WITH MY HUSBAND AND THEY'VE BOTH TAUGHT ME A FEW THINGS. FISK AND HIS SON ARE ALWAYS HANGING OUT TOGETHER. I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT MORE FAMILIAR WITH THEM.
I DON'T KNOW. HIS WIFE GIVES ME A BAD VIBE WHEN I'M NEAR BY, AND THEY'RE ALWAYS FIGHTING.
TRUE. SHE DOES HAVE A CERTAIN "SHREWY" QUALITY.

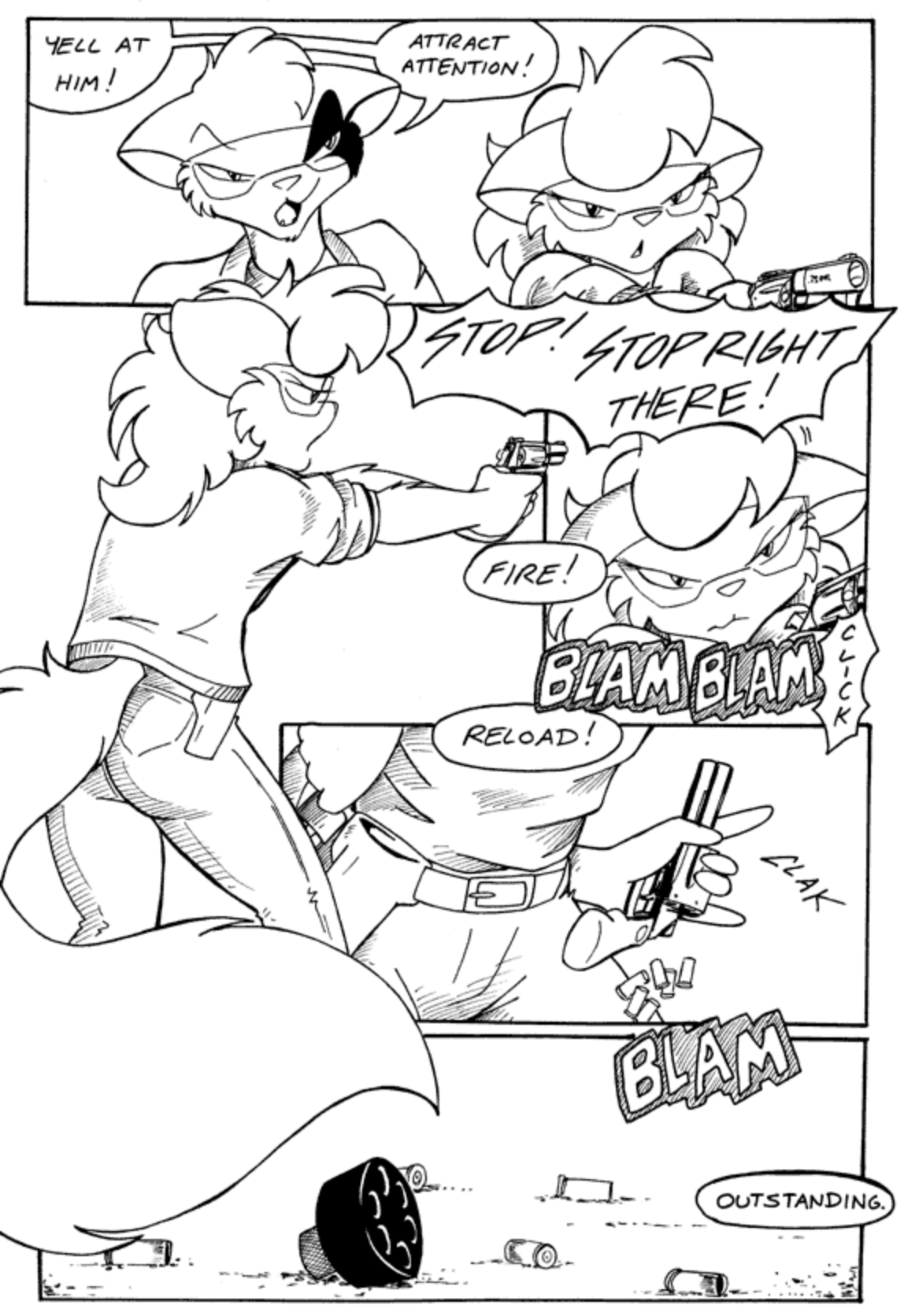
HEY BOYS.
HEY DAD. CAN I HAVE SOME DOUGH SO I CAN HIT THE ARCADE THIS AFTER-NOON?
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW YOUR MOTHER FEELS ABOUT THOSE VIOLENT GAMES, RYAN.
YEAH. I KNOW.
HERE'S A TWENTY. TELL HER YOU WENT TO THE MALL OR SOMETHING.
AWESOME. THANKS, DAD.

GOOD MORNING, SAM.
RAKE RAKE
OH, GOOD MORNING, SHEILA.
UM... HI.
SWISH
KELLY TELLS ME YOU GIVE PERSONAL SELF DEFENSE AND FIREARM INSTRUCTION AS A SIDE BUSINESS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WELL, THAT'S A BIG RESPONSIBILITY. IT'S NOT SOMETHING TO TAKE LIGHTLY...
... BUT... WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS THE BEST PLACE TO TALK IT OVER. I'LL BE AT DAVE'S GUNROOM AFTER 3 TOMMOROW IF YOU'RE STILL SERIOUS.


AVE'S
FN FAL
RUGER MINI-14
H&K MP5
STEYR AUG
SHEILA!
COME ON BACK!

I SUPPOSE THE FIRST THING I SHOULD ASK IS WHY YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THIS?
WELL...
FIVE YEARS AGO... I WAS RAPED. IT WAS IN MY OWN HOUSE. MY SON WOKE UP AND STOPPED IT WITH A BAT...
I DON'T EVER WANT TO FEEL THAT HELPLESS AGAIN.
I'M SORRY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. BUT I HAVEN'T DATED SINCE. AND...
... I REALIZE I HAVE A SECURITY AND A TRUST CONCERN.
IF YOU WERE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION AGAIN, COULD YOU BRING YOURSELF TO USE DEADLY FORCE?
I DON'T THINK I'D HAVE A PROBLEM.

JUST LIKE WE PRACTICED.
JUST KEEP YOUR SIGHTS LINED UP ON THE TARGET AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THE TRIGGER.
DON'T ANTICIPATE THE SHOT AND JUST STAY FOCUSED ON THOSE SIGHTS...
BLAM!
PIFF!
GOOD. GO AHEAD AND SHOOT OUT THE REST OF THE CHAMBERS.

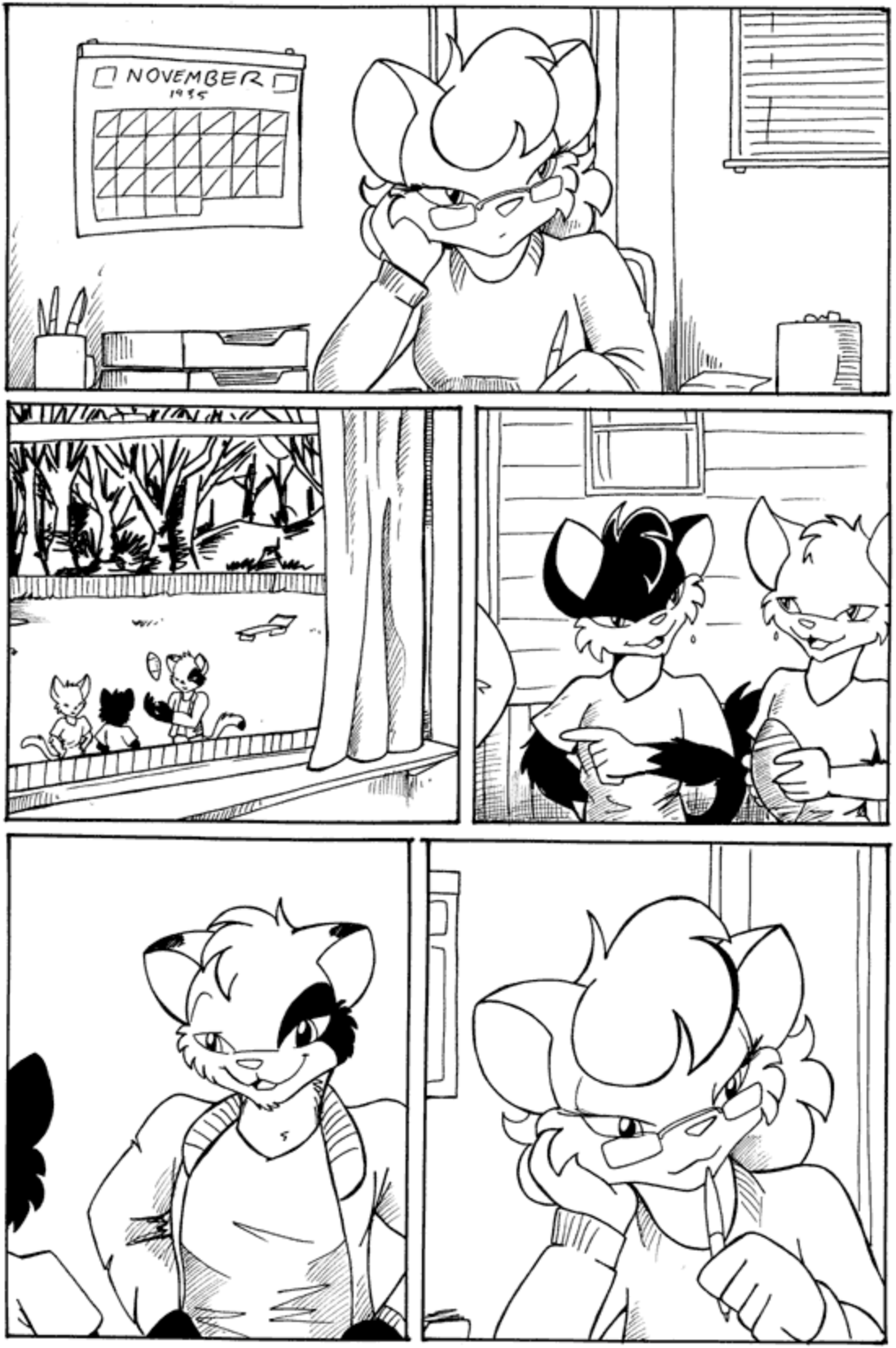

YELL AT HIM!
ATTRACT ATTENTION!
STOP! STOP RIGHT THERE!
FIRE!
BLAM BLAM
CLICK
RELOAD!
CLAK
BLAM
OUTSTANDING.

THAT'S GOOD. COLLECT YOUR TARGET AND TAKE A BREAK.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
YOUR GUNBAG IS BEEPING.
YEAH? OH HI, HONEY.
POP!
MMHM. YEAH. ABOUT SEVEN, TONIGHT.
I'M WITH A CLIENT. UH HUH, SHOOTING.
WHAT'S IT MATTER?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!

YES. I'M AT THE RANGE. YES, I'M GETTING PAID.
NO.
NO! I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION!
OH, I LOVE THE COUCH! IT'S QUIETER AND WARMER!
SHIT!
CLACK!
ZIIIIIIP!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'LL LIVE.
NEXT WEEK WE'LL BE AT THE GYM. I'LL GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS.

YOUR DINNER'S IN THE FRIDGE. RYAN AND I ALREADY ATE.
OKAY. THANKS.

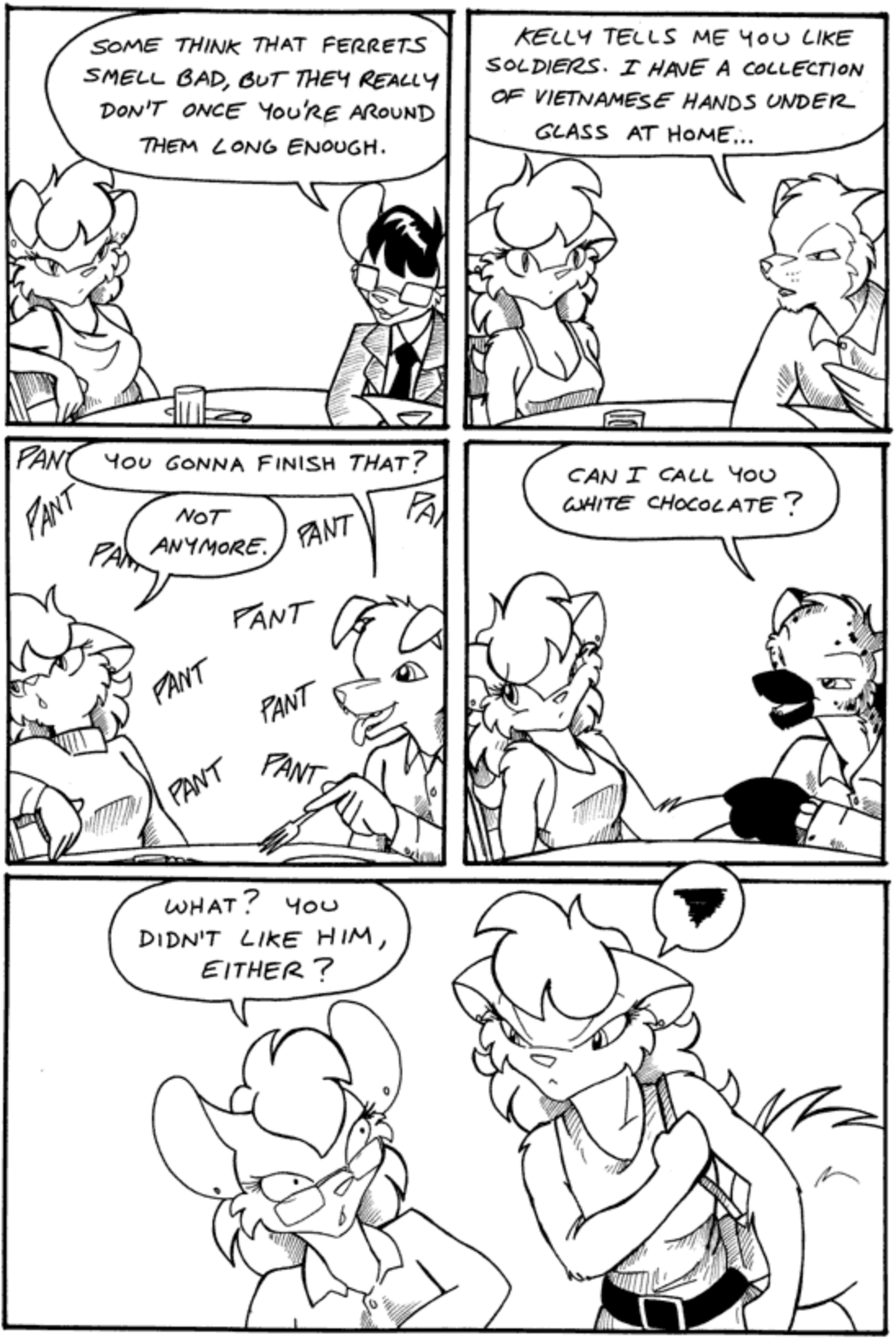
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
UFF!
INTERCEPTION! WOO!
BAH!


NOVEMBER
1995

HELLO MR. TOBS.
OH, HEY SHEILA.
CAN I HAVE MY SON BACK? HE NEEDS TO EAT DINNER.
YOU MAY WANT TO THROW HIM INTO THE SHOWER, FIRST.
WHAT ARE WE HAVING?
CHICKEN, RICE, COLLARDS, AND-
POTATOES?
MMHM.
GROWL!

SHEILA? YOO-HOOOO!?
BOO?
YEEEK!
OH GOD... YOU SCARED ME, SAM.
I MEAN KELLY!

SAM?
SHEILA!
ER...
NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT... I MEAN, I'VE JUST BEEN TRAINING SO MUCH, YOU KNOW?
SIP
THEN YOU'RE READY TO DATE! THAT'S GOOD BECAUSE I BROUGHT A LIST!
LIST?


SOME THINK THAT FERRETS SMELL BAD, BUT THEY REALLY DON'T ONCE YOU'RE AROUND THEM LONG ENOUGH.
KELLY TELLS ME YOU LIKE SOLDIERS. I HAVE A COLLECTION OF VIETNAMESE HANDS UNDER GLASS AT HOME...
PANT
YOU GONNA FINISH THAT?
NOT ANYMORE.
PANT
CAN I CALL YOU WHITE CHOCOLATE?
WHAT? YOU DIDN'T LIKE HIM, EITHER?

HMMM.

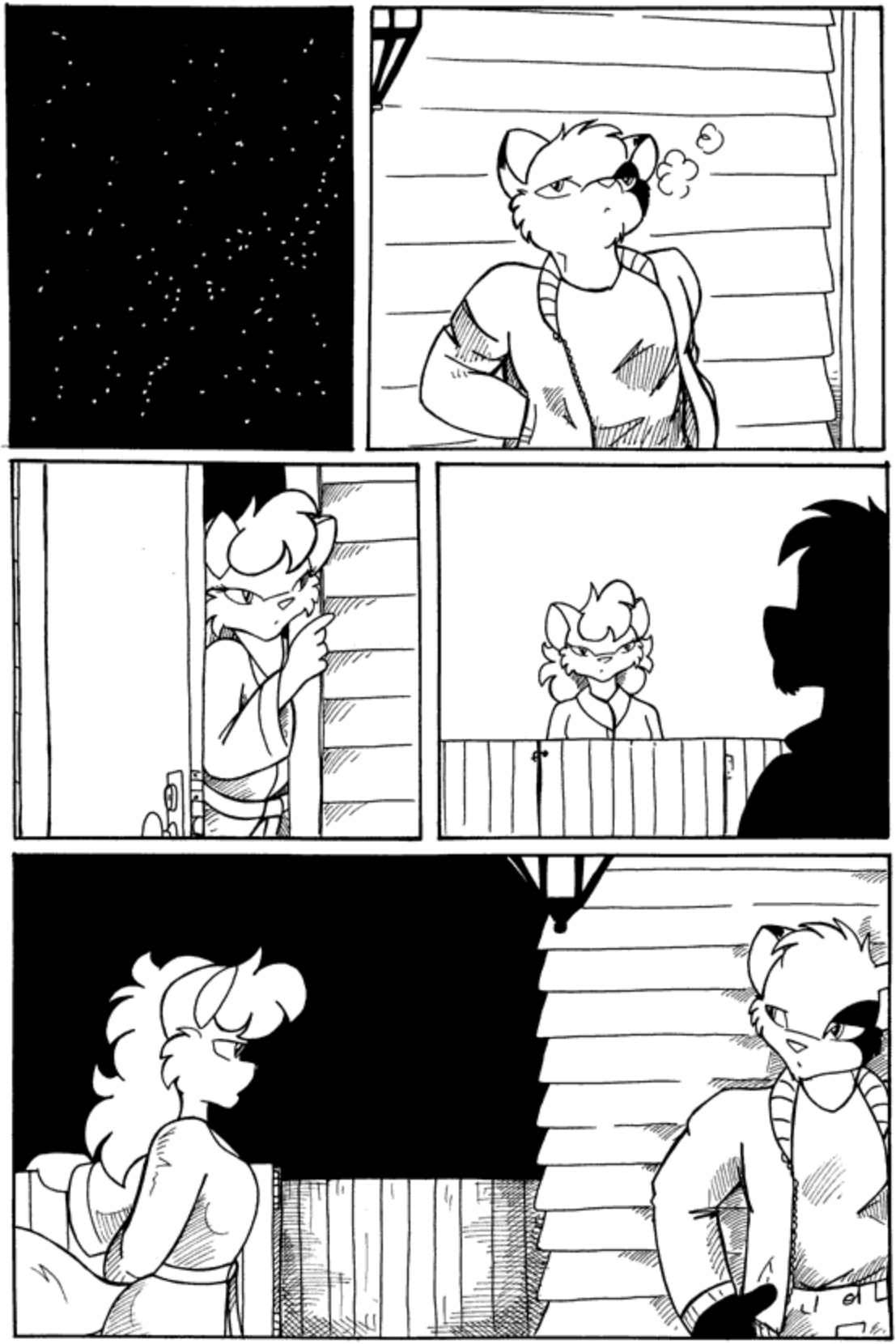
SAM? IT'S TWO IN THE MORNING. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HEY SHEILA. JUST HAVING A HARD TIME SLEEPING.
I HEARD YOU FIGHTING, TONIGHT.
YEAH, SORRY. IT'S BEEN A PRETTY BAD MONTH. IT'LL PROBABLY GET BETTER.
IT ALWAYS DOES. I JUST USUALLY NEED SOME TIME ALONE. TO THINK. TO CALM DOWN.
AS LONG AS I DON'T SAY OR DO ANYTHING RASH, IT'LL BE FINE.

THERE'S JUST SO MUCH THAT SETS HER OFF. I WALK ON EGG-SHELLS. SHE HATES MY JOB. SHE HATES MY HOURS.
WE DISAGREE ON HOW TO RAISE RYAN. SHE'S ACCUSED ME OF HAVING AFFAIRS.
BUT, WE HANG IN THERE FOR RYAN.
SHE'D KILL ME IF SHE KNEW I WAS UP AND TALKING TO YOU...
IN FACT, I SHOULD HEAD IN SOON, IN CASE SHE WAKES UP.
WELL, IF IT MATTERS TO YOU... I THINK YOU'RE A GOOD MAN AND A GOOD FATHER.

SKKK
I REALLY SHOULD GO. I'LL HAVE TO TALK TO YOU, LATER.

BLAM
BLAM
TIME?
YO! SAM!
OH, SHIT! SORRY JERRY. I SPACED...
BEEP!
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT, AGAIN.
YOU'VE BEEN SPACED ALL DAY. WHAT'S UP?

HOME TROUBLES?
CLUNK
I GUESS IT'S OBVIOUS. IT'S BEEN PRETTY BAD LATELY.
I'M GETTING TIRED OF IT, JERRY. IT'S GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE THE IRRATIONAL AND PARANOID DELUSIONS ARE THE NORM. I MISS THE AFFECTIONATE WOMAN I MARRIED.
I'M WONDERING IF THE SITUATION IS SALVAGEABLE.
WELL, WHATEVER YOU DO, KEEP RYAN IN MIND. YOUR KIDS ARE YOUR GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY. DON'T BLOW IT.



IT'S COLD OUT HERE.
SHEILA...
IF YOU NEED TO BE AWAY...
AT LEAST COME IN OUT OF THE COLD.

LUCY, I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
DOES IT INVOLVE KNEEING YOU IN THE BALLS?
CAN YOU SLIP THIS NOTE TO CINDY IN YOUR GYM CLASS, TOMMOROW?
OOO! DOES MY BROTHER HAVE A CRUSH?
YES.
CAN YOU AT LEAST PRETEND TO BE EMBARASSED? FOR MY SAKE!?

LUCY, WHAT'S YOUR BROTHER DOING WITH YOUR WAGON?

THAT LOOKS SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE A PILE OF FRESH FORESKINS.
OH. MY. GOD.

FISK! WHERE DID YOU GET... THOSE!?
COOL, HUH?
NO.
THEY'RE JUST SHREDDED PIG SKINS I GOT FROM THE BUTCHER SHOP. I HEARD JENNY'S DAD COMPLAINING ABOUT LAWYERS, SO I'M GOING TO TELL HIM THESE ARE THEIR FORESKINS.
THOSE STRAY DOGS SURE LOOK IMPRESSED.
AH! DAMN! QUICK! RUN HOME AND GET MY BB GUN!
BARK!
BARK
RRRRRRR
ROWF!
GRRRRR!

BRRRRING!
HMPH... LET IT RING...
I CAN'T. IT MIGHT BE MY KIDS...

HELLO? HI, LUCY!

WHAT!? DOG ATTACK!?
HOSPITAL?!!

RABIES!?

FISK'S HAD ALL HIS SHOTS AS A PRECAUTION, AND THE LAD'S GOING TO BE FINE.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR. THIS YOUNG MAN'S IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.
WHAT'D I DO!?
LUCY TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR LITTLE HAIRBRAINED STUNT WITH A WAGON FULL OF PORK. YOU RUINED A VERY NICE EVENING FOR YOUR MOTHER, AND DON'T YOU LAY YOUR EARS AT ME WHEN I'M TALKING!
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, THOSE WERE THE FORESKINS OF SLAIN LAWYERS. I WAS ON MY WAY TO IMPRESS JENNY'S DAD WITH THEM WHEN I WAS AMBUSHED.
I CAN WRITE YOU A REFERAL TO A GOOD CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST...
GOD, YOU PEOPLE...

FISK, HONEY, I'M GOING TO SPEND THE DAY WITH FRIENDS. THERE'S SEVERAL PHONE NUMBERS ON THE FRIDGE IF YOU NEED ME.
OKAY, MOM.
WHERE'S LUCY?
STILL ASLEEP.
MUNCH
SAVE HER SOME CEREAL, OKAY?
SHAKE SHAKE

HEY, LUCY! I ATE ALL THE CEREAL, BUT I GOT YOU A PEAR AND HALF A POP-TART AND...
WHOA. YOU LOOK ROUGH.
I FEEL SICK.
SICK!? YOU CAN'T BE SICK! MOM'S GOING TO BE GONE ALL DAY!
LUCKY FOR YOU, I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR WHEN I GROW UP!
YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME.
KER-SNAP!!

I BET I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT DISEASE YOU HAVE, OTHER THAN JUST GIRL GERMS.
MWEH.
I THINK YOU MAY HAVE SYPHILIS.
WHAT'S THAT?
WHOA... MAYBE NOT.
GIMME THAT!

GOT SOME ORANGE JUICE?
YEAH, MOM. I GOT IT.
GO TO MY MEDICINE CABINET AND YOU SHOULD FIND SOME STORE BRAND DECONGESTANT.
WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?
THEY'RE RED CAPSULES.
I'VE GOT SOME INSIDE A LITTLE ROUND CALENDAR.
NO, HONEY. PUT THOSE BACK.
OKAY, GOT SOME.
GIVE HER ONE AND LET HER SLEEP. THEY'LL MAKE HER DROWSY.
OKAY.
FUCK.

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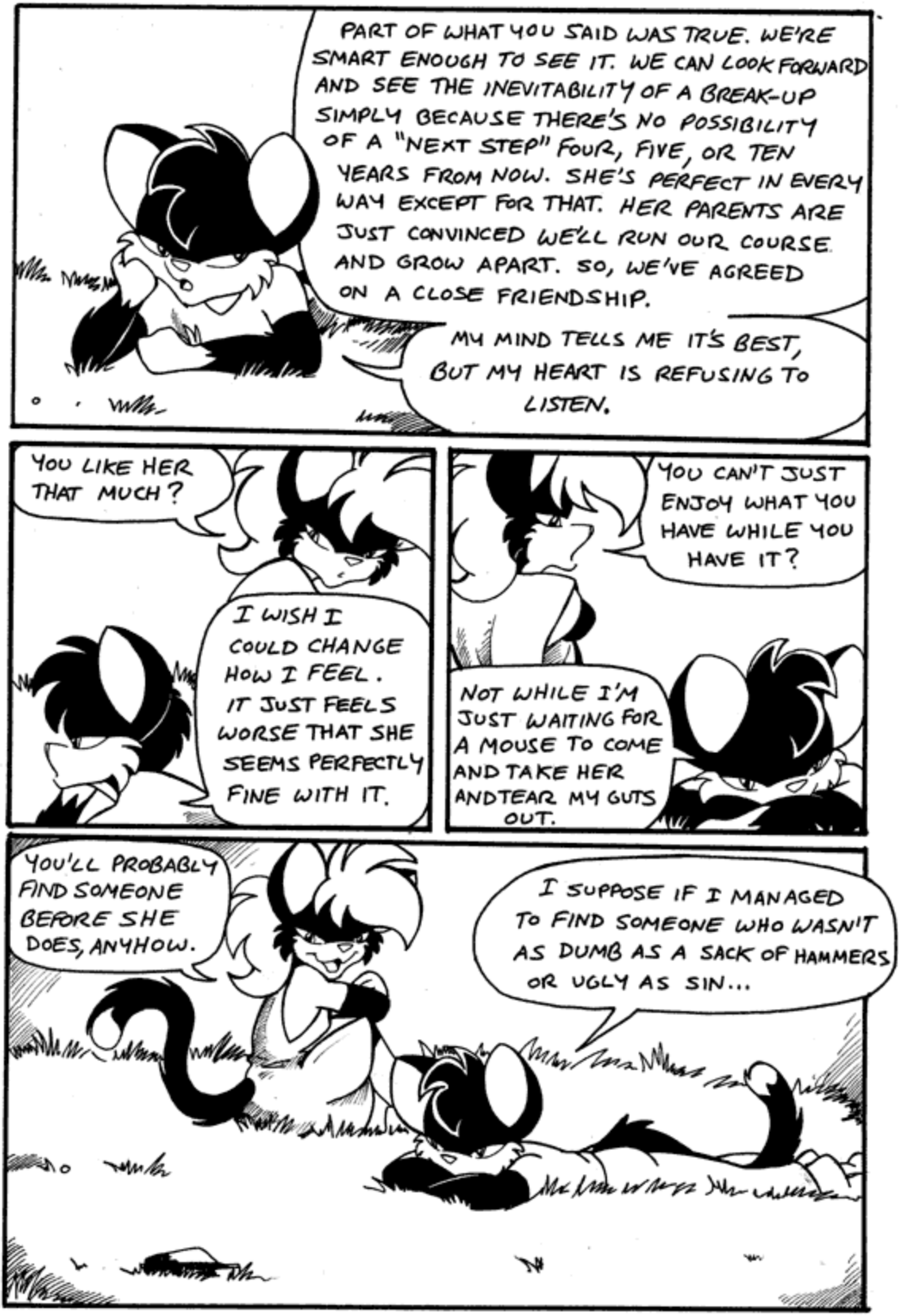
NO, HONEY. PUT THOSE BACK.
OKAY, GOT SOME.
GIVE HER ONE AND LET HER SLEEP. THEY'LL MAKE HER DROWSY.
OKAY.
FUCK.

I'M REALLY NOT GOOD WITH WORDS. I HAVE TO TRY AT LEAST... BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH. LUCY WANTED TO SET US UP, AND I GOT PRESSURED INTO IT.
BUT, THAT'S NOT ALL OF IT...
WHEN WE WERE TALKING IN THE HALLWAY, I REALIZED EVERYTHING I WAS SAYING WAS TRUE. MOST BOYS JUST LOOK FOR SOMETHING PRETTY. I GUESS I MAY HAVE GOTTEN BURNED OUT ON PURELY PHYSICAL GIRLS WHEN I WAS WITH NIKKI... I DIDN'T KNOW HOW NICE IT'D BE TO HAVE A GIRL AS A FRIEND.
I'M SORRY I LIED, INITIALLY. IF YOU WANT TO KEEP HATING ME, I'LL UNDERSTAND AND I'LL LET YOU BE. BUT, I HAVE TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I REALLY FELL FOR YOU... ... BEFORE I GO.

IS FISK JOINING US FOR DINNER, AGAIN?
I DIDN'T THINK SO. WHY DO YOU ASK?
I SAW HIM GO UPSTAIRS.
YES. HE WENT UPSTAIRS TO SPEAK TO ELIZABETH ABOUT SOMETHING.
YES, BUT I DIDN'T SEE HIM LEAVE.
HE'S BEEN UP THERE FOR FORTY MINUTES!
RIGHT. OKAY. I'LL GO CHECK.

THAT'S MY AUNT. SHE LIVES IN NEW YORK WITH AN APARTMENT FULL OF FERRETS AND A LITTLE WIMP FOR A HUSBAND. SHE HATES MY DAD.
I THINK A FAMILY THIS BIG WOULD BE MOSTLY EMBARASSING.
I THINK IT'S NICE TO HAVE HISTORY. THAT'S MY MOTHER'S FATHER. HE DIED FIGHTING THE EGYPTIANS.
YOUR DAD DIED FIGHTING, RIGHT? IF HE WERE ALIVE YOU'D BE MORE PROUD THAN EMBARASSED.
YOU KNOW... I HAVEN'T REALLY THOUGHT—
ELIZABETH?
DINNER'S ALMOST READY. FISK CAN JOIN US IF HE'D LIKE.
OKAY!

HOW'D IT GO?
IT WENT OKAY.
ARE YOU STILL GOING OUT?
WE'RE GOOD FRIENDS. "KISSING FRIENDS".
YOU DON'T SOUND HAPPY.
PLISH
PLISH
PLISH
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.

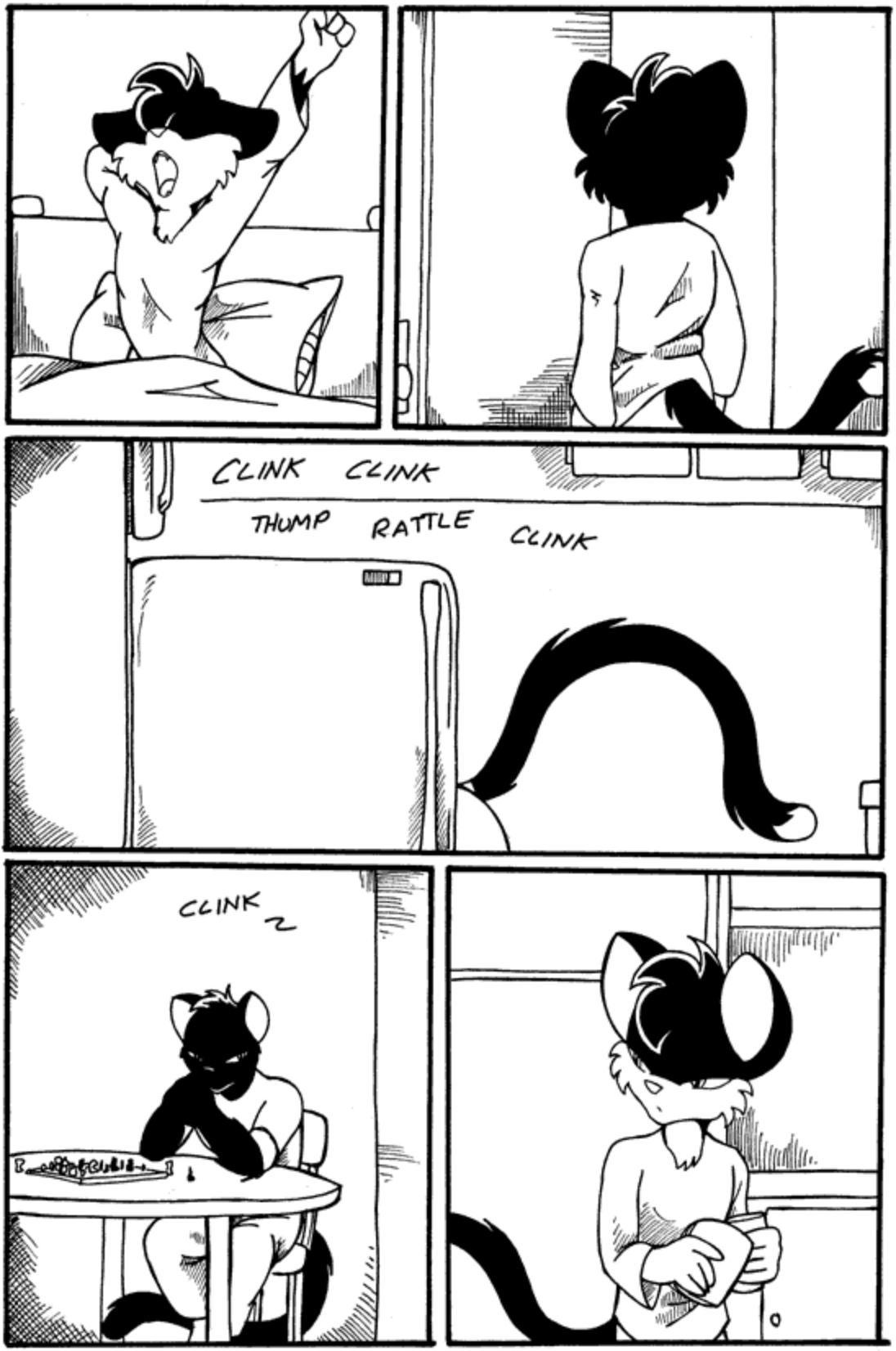

PART OF WHAT YOU SAID WAS TRUE. WE'RE SMART ENOUGH TO SEE IT. WE CAN LOOK FORWARD AND SEE THE INEVITABILITY OF A BREAK-UP SIMPLY BECAUSE THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF A "NEXT STEP" FOUR, FIVE, OR TEN YEARS FROM NOW. SHE'S PERFECT IN EVERY WAY EXCEPT FOR THAT. HER PARENTS ARE JUST CONVINCED WE'LL RUN OUR COURSE AND GROW APART. SO, WE'VE AGREED ON A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP.
MY MIND TELLS ME IT'S BEST, BUT MY HEART IS REFUSING TO LISTEN.
YOU LIKE HER THAT MUCH?
I WISH I COULD CHANGE HOW I FEEL. IT JUST FEELS WORSE THAT SHE SEEMS PERFECTLY FINE WITH IT.
YOU CAN'T JUST ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE WHILE YOU HAVE IT?
NOT WHILE I'M JUST WAITING FOR A MOUSE TO COME AND TAKE HER ANDTEAR MY GUTS OUT.
YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND SOMEONE BEFORE SHE DOES, ANYHOW.
I SUPPOSE IF I MANAGED TO FIND SOMEONE WHO WASN'T AS DUMB AS A SACK OF HAMMERS OR UGLY AS SIN...

SIGH...
END

WIRRRRRR
LOOK AT THIS MESS!
BEEP
BEEPLE
MY GRACIOUS!
PUT ON A SWEATER!
SCHLORP
THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE THE WRECK OF THE HESPERAS!

WIRRR
RRRR
...R
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE SPASTIC CLEANING, MOM?
WE'RE HAVING COMPANY.
WHO?
THE KELSOS ARE STOPPING OVER FOR THE NIGHT ON THEIR WAY TO FLORIDA.
WHO?
THEY'RE OLD FRIENDS OF MINE AND YOUR FATHER'S. THEY HELPED ME A LOT WHEN HE DIED.
OH. DO THEY SLEEP EARLY?
STUFF
STUFF
YES. THE STEREO WILL BE PLAYED AT A TOLERABLE LEVEL, PLEASE.
=SIGH= ALL RIGHT.
IF MADONNA'S HALF AS TALENTED AS YOU CLAIM, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY HER AT A REASONABLE, INDOOR VOLUME AS WELL.
FINE.

COME IN, YOU TWO! HOW WAS YOUR TRIP?
GLAD IT'S NEARLY OVER!
HOW ABOUT YOU, MM? DOING OKAY?
HANGING IN THERE, MIMI.
AND THE KITTENS? I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE THEY WERE THIS BIG.
GROWING LIKE WEEDS!
:GASP: IS THAT FISK? HE LOOKS JUST LIKE HIS FATHER!
?
I SURE REMEMBER THOSE EYES.


CLINK CLINK
THUMP RATTLE CLINK
CLINK 2

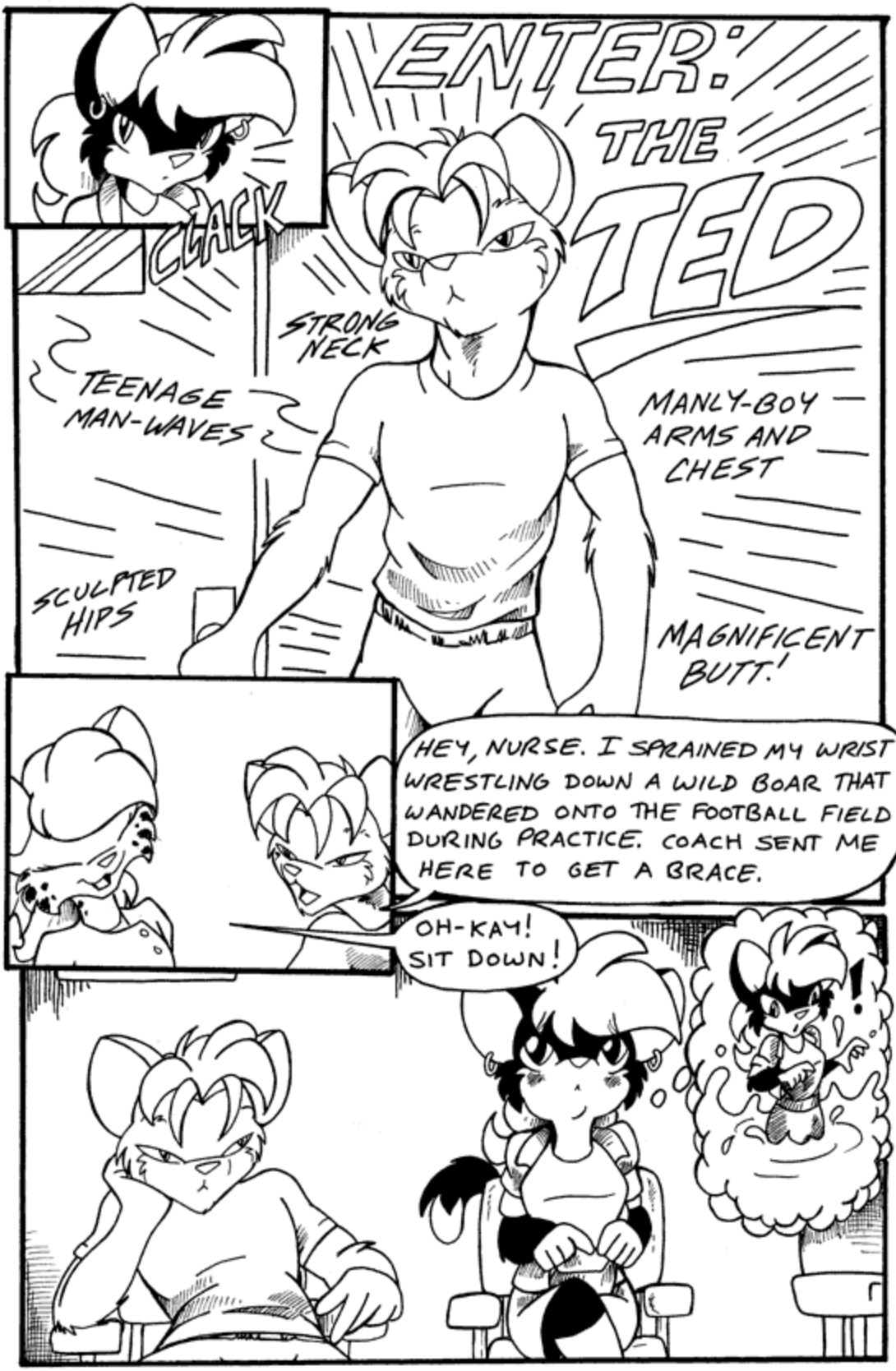
YOU PLAY CHESS BY YOURSELF?
WHEN THERE'S NO ONE ELSE AROUND.
I USED TO PLAY WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, BUT IT'S BEEN A FEW YEARS.
WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT TOO BUSY, PULL UP A CHAIR AND TAKE A SIDE? WE'LL SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.
OKAY. SURE. TURN THE BOARD. I'LL TAKE BLACK.

WHY'D YOU CHOOSE BLACK, FISK?
NOT SURE. IT ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS A SNEAKY COLOR
IT'S TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH EVIL, OR THE BAD SIDE OF A FIGHT.
I DON'T THINK THE BLACK PIECES SEE IT THAT WAY. I DON'T THINK ANY SIDE FIGHTS FOR WHAT THEY THINK IS WRONG. I THINK IT'S JUST A CLASH OF DIFFERENCES...
WHY CLASH, THEN?
...
I THINK WHEN IDEAS ENTER INTO COMPETITION, THEY HAVE TO RESOLVE DOMINANCE. I GUESS THE ONLY TRUELY "BAD" IDEA IS ONE THAT TAKES AWAY SELF DETERMINATION.
THAT'S A PRETTY STARTLING CONCLUSION FROM SUCH A YOUNG MAN, FISK. VERY INTERESTING.

MOM SAID YOU KNEW MY DAD DURING THE WAR.
THAT'S RIGHT. I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF HIM IF YOU KNEW HIM. IT REALLY TORE ME UP WHEN HE DIED.
WHAT WAS HE LIKE?
DEDICATED AND RELIABLE. HE WAS WILLING TO DIE TO GIVE YOU THE BEST LIFE POSSIBLE, EVEN IF HE WOULD NEVER LAY EYES ON YOU.
WAS IT WORTH IT?
WHAT'S THAT?
VIETNAM.
...
I'VE BEEN ALL OVER THE WORLD AND I'VE SEEN A LOT OF STRIFE. I SEE HOW PEOPLE LIVE IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND SO DID YOUR FATHER. OUTSIDE OF THE AMERICAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, WHEREVER WE RETREAT, WHEREVER WE DON'T EXTEND OUR PROTECTION, I'VE SEEN PEOPLE SUFFER. I LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE, HERE, WITH A NICE HOUSE, WARM SHEETS, PLENTY OF FOOD, NO FEAR OF SOCIETY CRUMBLING AROUND YOUR EARS. YOU HAVE A MOTHER AND A SISTER WHO LOVE YOU DEARLY, A FAMILY THAT SOME WOULD LOVE TO BE A PART OF. YOUR FATHER DIED TO SECURE THIS FOR YOU, FISK. IF HE HADN'T, SOMEONE ELSE'S FATHER WOULD HAVE HAD TO...

THE COLD WAR IS AN ELABORATE GAME OF CHESS. WE FIGHT OVER IMPORTANT SQUARES, AND FOR DOMINANCE OVER SQUARES WE DON'T OCCUPY. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST CASTLE YOUR KING WHILE YOUR ENEMIES MASS AGAINST YOU. WE FIGHT TO HOLD THEM, DISRUPT THEM, AND BLEED THEM OF RESOURCES IN THE HOPES THAT SOMEDAY YOU, OR YOUR CHILDREN, WILL NOT HAVE TO FACE THE THREAT OF COMMUNIST HEGEMONY.
SO, WAS VIETNAM WORTH IT?
WE LEARNED A LOT FROM THAT CONFLICT. WE'VE LEARNED THINGS THAT WILL ENSURE THEY'LL PAY DEARLY FOR THEIR VICTORY THERE. ONLY THE FUTURE WILL SHOW THE RESULTS OF OUR RESOLVE.
HOPEFULLY, IN THE END, WE'LL BE THE ONES SAYING...
"CHECKMATE"!
TOK
DANG!
THAT WAS A GOOD GAME, FISK. YOU'LL MAKE A GOOD CHESS PLAYER, SOME DAY.
END

SPRAYBERR
HIGH SCHOO
NURSE
HAVE A SEAT, LUCY. YOUR MOTHER SHOULD BE HERE ANY MOMENT.
OKAY.


ENTER: THE TED
CLACK
STRONG NECK
TEENAGE MAN-WAVES
MANLY-BOY ARMS AND CHEST
SCULPTED HIPS
MAGNIFICENT BUTT!
HEY, NURSE. I SPRAINED MY WRIST WRESTLING DOWN A WILD BOAR THAT WANDERED ONTO THE FOOTBALL FIELD DURING PRACTICE. COACH SENT ME HERE TO GET A BRACE.
OH-KAY! SIT DOWN!
!

READY TO GO, LUCY?
I GUESS.
WHO WAS THAT WOMAN?
SIT DOWN!

IS THIS HER FIRST EXAM?
YES.
HAVE A SEAT AND WE'LL CALL YOU IN A MOMENT.
WHAT'S THIS DOCTOR LIKE?
CALM AND NICE. PLUS, SHE'S A WOMAN, WHICH SHOULD BE LESS CREEPY FOR YOU.
COME ON BACK, LUCY. WE'RE READY.
GLUG GLUG
LAP LAP

WHY AM I GOING ON THE PILL? I'M NOT HAVING SEX.
I WANT YOU TO GET USED TO THE ROUTINE, NOW.
THIS IS EMBARASSING.
MY SISTER HAD A SCARE WHEN I WAS GROWING UP. NOW, THAT'S EMBARASSING.
YOU SEE, LITTLE BOYS SPREAD STRESS AND MISERY, WHILE LITTLE GIRLS GATHER IT FROM FAR AND WIDE AND BRING IT RIGHT HOME.
WE'RE NOT KILLING UNBORN KITTENS IN THIS FAMILY, AND I DON'T WANT GRANDKITTENS UNTIL I'M AT LEAST FORTY-FIVE.
AREN'T THESE KIND OF LIKE GIVING ME PERMISSION TO HAVE SEX?
WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU ASKED FOR MY PERMISSION TO DO SOMETHING STUPID?
OH.

HEY, FANG. YOU KNOW LUCY BLACK?
YEAH.
I'VE GOT A PLAN. I'M GOING TO ASK HER OUT THIS FRIDAY.
BUT ISN'T SHE A FRESHMAN?
YES, BUT DID YOU SEE HER MOTHER? HOLY SHIT!
SHE'S PERFECT! A PORCELAIN WHITE GODDESS WITH AN ASS TO DIE FOR!
DON'T GET SO CLOSE WITHOUT PANTS.
YOU'RE GOING TO GO OUT WITH A GIRL TO GET AT HER MOTHER? SHE'S A GROWN WOMAN, DUDE.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND WOMEN, FANG. FORBIDDEN ROMANCE IS BIG WITH THEM. I THINK IF I PLAY THINGS RIGHT, I HAVE A CHANCE.

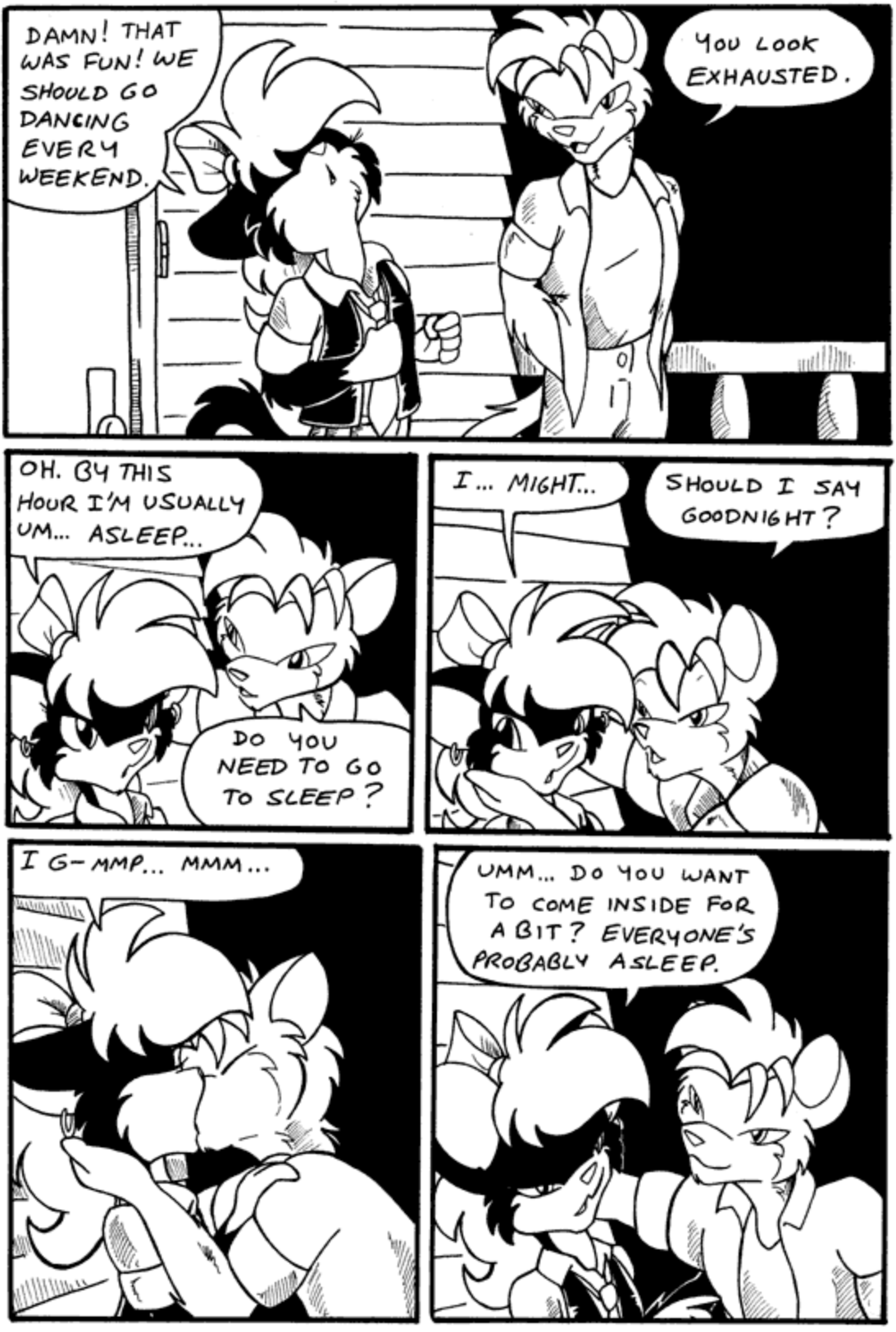
BRRIIING!
HELLO?
HELLO. IS LUCY AVAILABLE?
SHE'S IN THE SHOWER RIGHT NOW.
AH. WELL, COULD YOU TELL HER TED STEPHENS CALLED.
YOU SOUND CLOSE TO RAY STEVENS. ARE YOU RELATED?
NO, DUDE. JUST TELL HER—
YOU CALLED, RIGHT, RAY STEVENS. SHOULD SHE CALL YOU BACK?
SURE, LET ME GIVE YOU MY NUMBER...
WAIT... DID YOU SAY I WAS RAY STEVENS?
NO, TED STEPHENS. WITH A "V"?
NO NO. A "PH"... WAIT, WHAT'S IT MATTER?
NEVERMIND. JUST LET ME HAVE YOUR NUMBER, RAY, AND I'LL GIVE IT TO HER WHEN SHE GETS OUT.
DUDE...

ONLY WHEN I'M DANCIN' CAN I FEEL THIS FREEEE
WIGGLE
SHAKE
SLIIIIIIIDE
BUMP!
AT NIGHT I LOCK THE DOORS, WHERE NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE-EE
I'M TIRED OF DANCIN' HERE ALL BY MY SE-ELF
CLICK
BUMP!
TO-NIGHT I WANNA DANCE WITH SOME-ONE-ELSE
YEEEK!
FISK! DON'T YOU KNOCK!?
YEAH, I DID.

LET ME GET MY BRITCHES ON!
TED STEPHENS CALLED.
UFF!
TED!? WHEN!?
WHEN YOU WERE IN THE SHOWER.
TED? THE MOST GORGEOUS CAT IN SCHOOL TED?
JUST CALL HIM, OKAY. I PUT HIS NUMBER NEXT TO THE PHONE.
I CAN'T JUST CALL HIM... I'LL LOOK DESPERATE.

DINNER'S ALMOST READY! IT'S FRIED CHICKEN!
OH! I'M GOING OUT, TONIGHT.
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME. DO YOU NEED A RIDE?
NO. HE HAS A CAR.
WHAT? WHO HAS A CAR?
A GUY FROM SCHOOL...
OW!
WHOOOOOO?

SORRY IT TOOK A WHILE. MY MOTHER WAS SPAZZING A LITTLE.
OH?
BECAUSE YOU'RE SIXTEEN. SHE'S GOT THIS WHOLE PARANOID OUTLOOK ABOUT ME.
FFT. MY BROTHER COULD GO OUT WITH A GAY MONKEY AND SHE WOULDN'T CARE.
SHE USED TO DATE GUYS ALL THE TIME WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER.
OH HO! REALLY?


DAMN! THAT WAS FUN! WE SHOULD GO DANCING EVERY WEEKEND.
YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED.
OH. BY THIS HOUR I'M USUALLY UM... ASLEEP...
DO YOU NEED TO GO TO SLEEP?
I... MIGHT...
SHOULD I SAY GOODNIGHT?
I G-MMP... MMM...
UMM... DO YOU WANT TO COME INSIDE FOR A BIT? EVERYONE'S PROBABLY ASLEEP.

zzZZzz...
MMMM HMM-MM
CLICK!

SQUEAK!
CLIK!
BLINK
!
SHHHH
HHHHH
HMM-
MMM
SHHHHHHHHHHH
SQUEAK!

ZZMMZZ...
OOOOOOO... MROWWWL... MM ...OHHH, TED...
PINCH
PINCH PINCH
OH YEAH, BABY. TAKE THAT PERKY BUTT INTO THE KITCHEN AND FIX ME A HAM SANDWICH.
AAAGH!
F*CK!
SHIT! FUCK! WHAT?

IT'S NOT FUNNY, YOU LITTLE ASSHOLE!
THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE WAS!
TED! SORRY! I FELL ASLEEP.
OH, IT'S OKAY. I WAS UPSTAIRS LOOKING FOR THE BATHROOM.
HEE...
WHEW...
FISK WAS JUST BEING A JUVENILE DICK.
FISK'S GOING TO BED.

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT, FANG.
MMM.
LUCY'S GOING TO A SLUMBER PARTY TONIGHT. HER BROTHER'S SPENDING THE NIGHT WITH HIS FRIENDS...
SHEILA BLACK WILL BE ALL ALONE WHEN I SHOW UP TO LAY ON THE BOYISH CHARM.
HOW DO I LOOK?
HOMOSEXUAL.
OH, FUCK YOU. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WOMEN, ANYWAY.

AHHH...
DING DONG
CLINK
WHO IN THE-
OH! OH MY...
HEE!

OH DEAR! TED!
DON'T YOU JUST LOOK CHARMING!
BUT LUCY'S OVER AT ELIZABETH'S HOUSE, TONIGHT. SHE'S JUST TWO HOUSES DOWN IF YOU WANT TO IMPRESS HER.
OH I SEE. MISS BLACK, IT'S NOT EASY FOR ME TO TELL YOU HOW GRATEFUL I AM FOR YOU ALLOWING LUCY TO GO OUT WITH ME.
YOU'RE AN AWESOME, STRONG WOMAN AND I THINK LUCY IS LUCKY TO HAVE YOU AS A MOTHER.
I THINK YOU DESERVE THESE, SHEILA.
OH!
SO, I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW MY APPRECIATION BY TREATING YOU TO DINNER, SOMETIME.

MMM.
DINNER WITH LUCY AND I? THAT'S AN AMAZING GESTURE, TED.
I... HAD MY HEART ON SPEAKING WITH YOU OVER DINNER... ALONE PERHAPS.
ALONE? IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT ON YOUR MIND, TED?
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE YOUNG AND UNSURE... IT'S HARD TO EXPRESS HOW I FEEL...
TED... ARE YOU ASKING ME OUT ON A DATE?
OH!
OH, YEAH.

TED, YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BE A BAD MOTHER. I RAISED LUCY AGAINST A LOT OF TOUGH ODDS. I BUILT A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER AND SHE TRUSTS ME AS SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN THROUGH LIFE AHEAD OF HER AND IS LOOKING OUT FOR HER...
YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BETRAY HER FOR A DATE WITH HER BOYFRIEND AND A CHANCE AT SOME SIXTEEN YEAR OLD PIECE OF DICK!?
W—
...YEAH?
GET OFF MY PROPERTY!

WHAT THE HELL!? HOW COULD YOU DO S-SOMETHING SO SICK AND SLIMY!!? JESUS T-TED!
CHRIST, I DON'T NEED ALL THIS EMOTIONAL BULLSHIT, RIGHT NOW!
YOU THINK I'M AFRAID OF YOU GETTING UPSET!?
FRESHMAN BITCHES LIKE YOU ARE A DIME PER DOZEN. NOW GET OFF MY CASE.
!
END

SOB!
YEESH.
WIMPER...
...
SOBBB!
CHOKE
THUMP
THUMP

LUCY?
WHAT?
YOU SOUNDED TERRIBLE.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SOUND, FISK?
WELL, AT LEAST YOU ONLY WENT OUT ON ONE DATE...
THAT'S NOT THE POINT! HE MADE ME FEEL LIKE A NOBODY! LIKE I WAS N-NOTHING BUT A WORTHLESS FLECK OF SHIT TO BE FLICKED ASIDE!
HAS ANYBODY EVER MADE YOU FEEL LIKE THAT!?

I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE OUT WITH HIM! SICK JOCK FUCKER... HOW CAN A GUY BE THAT WAY...
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT. I'M JUST A DIME PER DOZEN. ANOTHER STUPID GIRL WHO'LL DO ANYTHING.
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER DUMB GIRL. I ONLY HAVE ONE TWIN, YOU KNOW.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
WHAT I MEAN IS NO ONE EXPECTS YOU TO BE PERFECT OR HAVE FLAWLESS JUDGEMENT. BUT YOU'RE NOT JUST ANY GIRL. YOU'RE MY SISTER, AND I THINK I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN SOME FUCKING JOCK.
I HATE TO SEE YOU LIKE THIS. EVER SINCE YOU ALMOST DIED WHEN WE WERE NINE I'VE FELT MORE LIKE YOUR OLDER BROTHER THAN YOUR TWIN.
I THINK TED KNOWS HOW BADLY HE HURT YOU, BUT SOMETIMES OUR PRIDE IS TOUGHER THAN OUR SENSE OF HONOR. YOU'LL GET OVER ALL THIS IN TIME AND YOU'LL BE A BETTER JUDGE OF OTHERS AS A RESULT.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP YOU FEEL BETTER UNTIL THEN, THOUGH.
YOU WILL?
WILL YOU GO SHOPPING WITH ME, TOMMOROW?

HOW DOES THE MALL HELP?
MALLS ARE MAGICAL. THEY'RE BIG BUFFETS OF SHOPPING THERAPY.
WOULDN'T YOU RATHER GO SHOPPING WITH ELIZABETH?
NO. SHE'S NOT A GUY.
I NEED A NEW SET OF OUTFITS. NOTHING'S MORE HEALING THAN FEELING BEAUTIFUL AND WANTED. YOU'RE A GUY, SO YOU KNOW WHAT GUYS LIKE. I NEED YOUR INPUT.
I LOVE ELIZABETH AS A DEAR FRIEND, BUT HER CHOICE IN CLOTHING IS JUST... WELL... SO NOT ME.
GUYS LOVE GIRLS WHO PLAY ARCADE GAMES.
COME ON...

THIS IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO START.
NO, I'M NOT A 'PROSTITUTE' Boutique
OUTSTANDING.
YOU CAN TELL THESE ARE QUALITY CLOTHES BY THE PRICES.
THIS ONE HAS RIPS IN IT. IF I WORE IT, YOU COULD SEE MY BRA.
DO YOU THINK A BLACK BRA WOULD LOOK BETTER UNDER IT? BECAUSE IF SO I'D HAVE TO BUY ONE. FISK?
OH CHRIST, FISK.

HOW'S THIS?
COACH
CUTE.
MAYBE THIS IS TOO SLUTTY.
TRYING TOO HARD.
RAR?
WORDS FAIL ME.
I THINK YOU SHOULD WEAR THE OTHER ONE.
WHAT OTHER ONE?
YOU KNOW THE ONE.
NO.
WEAR IT.
FIIIIISK...
YOU'RE SUCH A PERV.
OH YES. PUT ON THAT POUTY FACE.
JUST LIKE THAT.

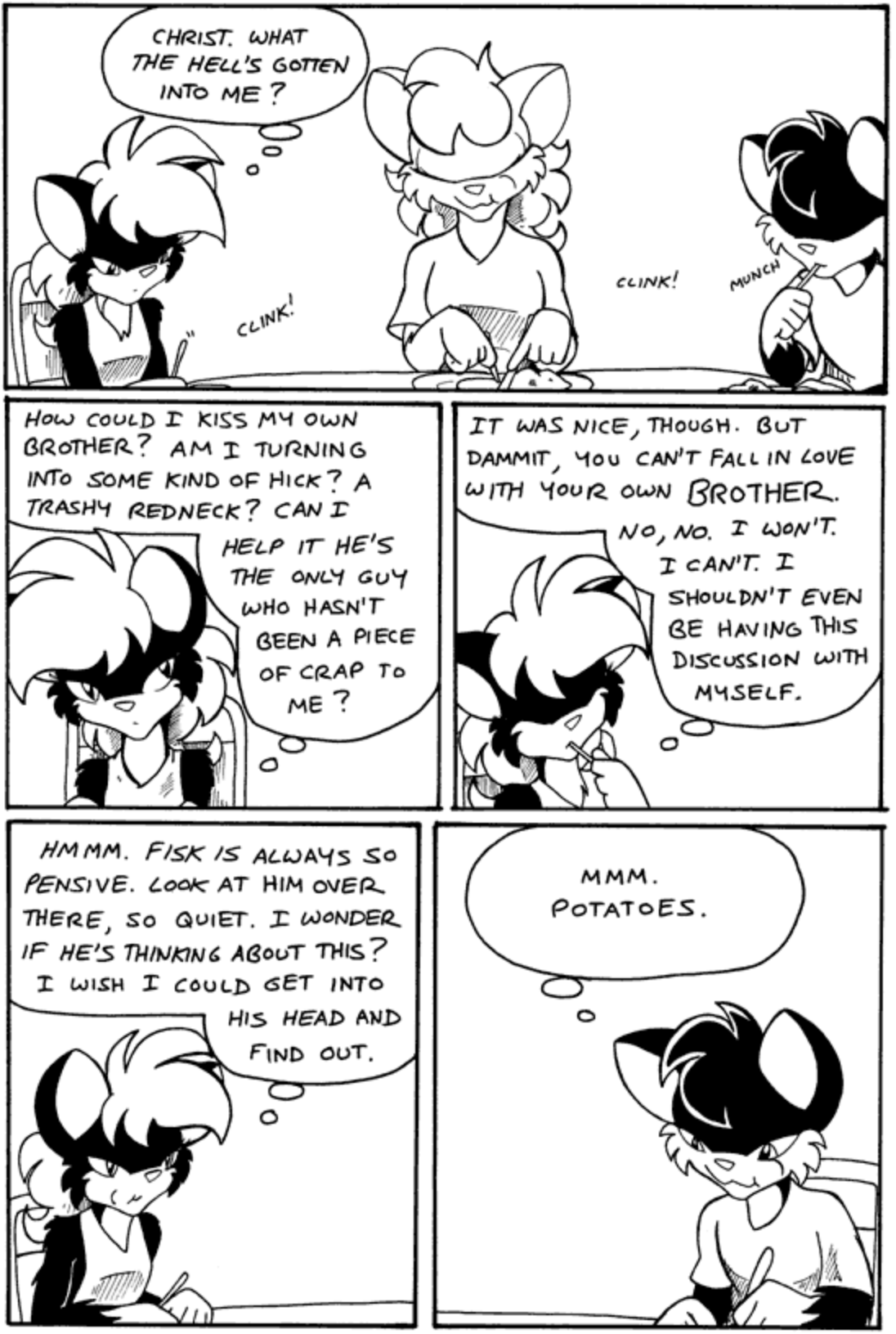
HOW'D YOU AFFORD ALL THAT ON YOUR ALLOWANCE?
WELL, FISK HELPED A LITTLE. HE THOUGHT I NEEDED IT MORE THAN HE DID.
AWWW! WHAT A LITTLE HERO!
YEAH.
WHAT... IS THIS?
UM. THONG UNDERWEAR.
SO PEOPLE DON'T SEE PANTY LINES ON MY BUTT WHEN I WEAR TIGHT SKIRTS.
TIGHT SKIRTS!?

FISK DID THAT?! WHAT AN AWESOME BROTHER!
I GUESS.
WE CAN'T EVEN GET MY BROTHER TO DO THE DISHES WHEN IT'S HIS TURN.
YOUR BROTHER'S SUCH A SWEET GUY!
IT'S TOO BAD HE'S NOT A MOUSE.
YEAH. THAT'S TOO BAD.

FISK. DO YOU EVER MISS BEING WITH ELIZABETH?
MM? OF COURSE I DO.
CLICK CLICKITY
WHY HAVEN'T YOU PURSUED ANOTHER GIRLFRIEND?
CLICK
I DON'T FEEL LIKE I FIT IN WITH ANYBODY. THINGS ARE JUST UNCOMFORTABLE. I DON'T WANT TO PLAY THE "IMPRESS ME" GAME, OR COMPETE WITH GUYS WHO LOOK LIKE TED.
EVERY-THING I TRY TO PURSUE FALLS APART. I GUESS I'M JUST TIRED OF IT.
I COULD HOOK YOU UP WITH SOMEONE WHO SEEMS NICE.
LUCY, I DON'T TRUST ANYONE WHO JUST SEEMS NICE.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO EVER BE HAPPY IF YOU DON'T TRUST ANYONE?
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN...
YOU TRUST ME AT LEAST, RIGHT?
OF COURSE I TRUST MY SISTER.

I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID THAT...
IT'S OKAY.
IT'S JUST-
KIDS! DINNER'S READY!


CHRIST. WHAT THE HELL'S GOTTEN INTO ME?
CLINK!
CLINK!
MUNCH
HOW COULD I KISS MY OWN BROTHER? AM I TURNING INTO SOME KIND OF HICK? A TRASHY REDNECK? CAN I HELP IT HE'S THE ONLY GUY WHO HASN'T BEEN A PIECE OF CRAP TO ME?
IT WAS NICE, THOUGH. BUT DAMMIT, YOU CAN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR OWN BROTHER.
NO, NO. I WON'T. I CAN'T. I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HAVING THIS DISCUSSION WITH MYSELF.
HMMM. FISK IS ALWAYS SO PENSIVE. LOOK AT HIM OVER THERE, SO QUIET. I WONDER IF HE'S THINKING ABOUT THIS? I WISH I COULD GET INTO HIS HEAD AND FIND OUT.
MMM. POTATOES.

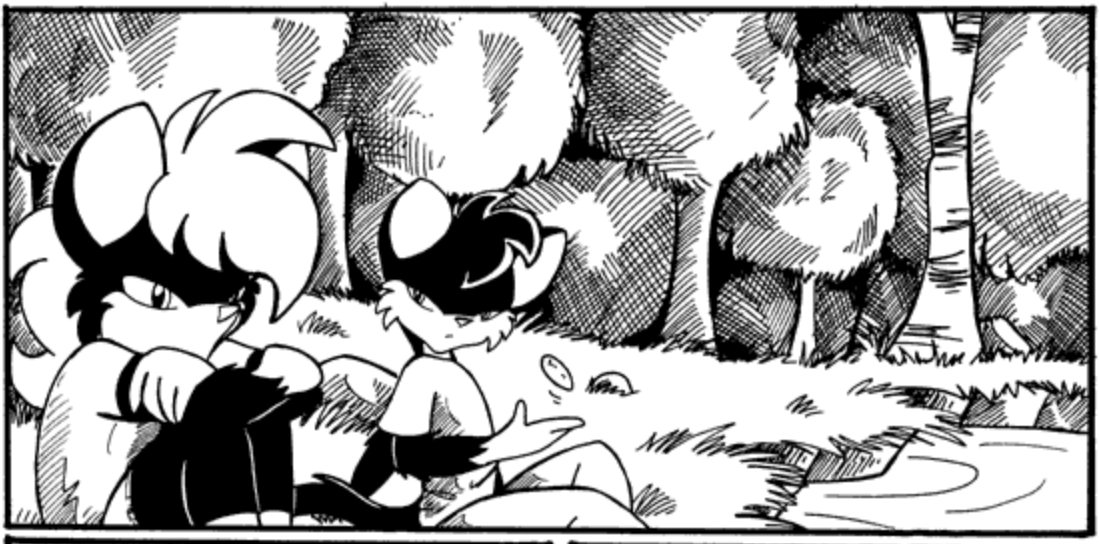
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M STILL THINKING ABOUT TED.
AT LEAST TOMMOROW'S SUNDAY. SO WHO CARES IF I CAN'T SLEEP.
I NEED SOMEONE TO HOLD. HOW AM I EVER GOING TO TRUST ANOTHER GUY FOR THAT THOUGH...
MAYBE I CAN GO TALK TO FISK, AGAIN. HE'S PROBABLY TRYING TO SLEEP.
I'VE BEEN TAKING A LOT OF HIS TIME, THOUGH. I HATE TO IMPOSE SO MUCH.

GO AHEAD. SLIP OFF TO FISK'S ROOM. YOU KNOW HOW THAT TURNED OUT THE LAST TIME.
THAT'S NOT WHY SHE WANTS TO GO! LUCY JUST NEEDS TO KNOW SOMEONE CARES!
SHE'S THOUGHT ABOUT IT! NO DENYING!
SO WILL A HEADACHE BUT WE STILL TAKE ASPIRIN!
LIVE A LITTLE!
SHE'S STILL IN PAIN! THOSE THOUGHTS WILL FADE.
MAKING OUT IS WAY DIFFERENT FROM ASPIRIN!
NOT WITH HER BROTHER!
POOF!
WHAT WILL BE IS WHAT SHE WILL KNOW HAS BEEN DONE.
WHAT?
SHAH..
COP OUT.

CLIK!
CLIK
I WAS LONELY.
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE.

TWEET
BLINK
ZZMMZZM
S
!
ZZMMZZRRWW.
?
GASP
GZZZZZM

NNF...?
SCOOTCH
SNUG
GOOD MORNING.
OH!
MMM...
NUZ
I'M GOING BACK TO MY ROOM BEFORE MOM WAKES UP.

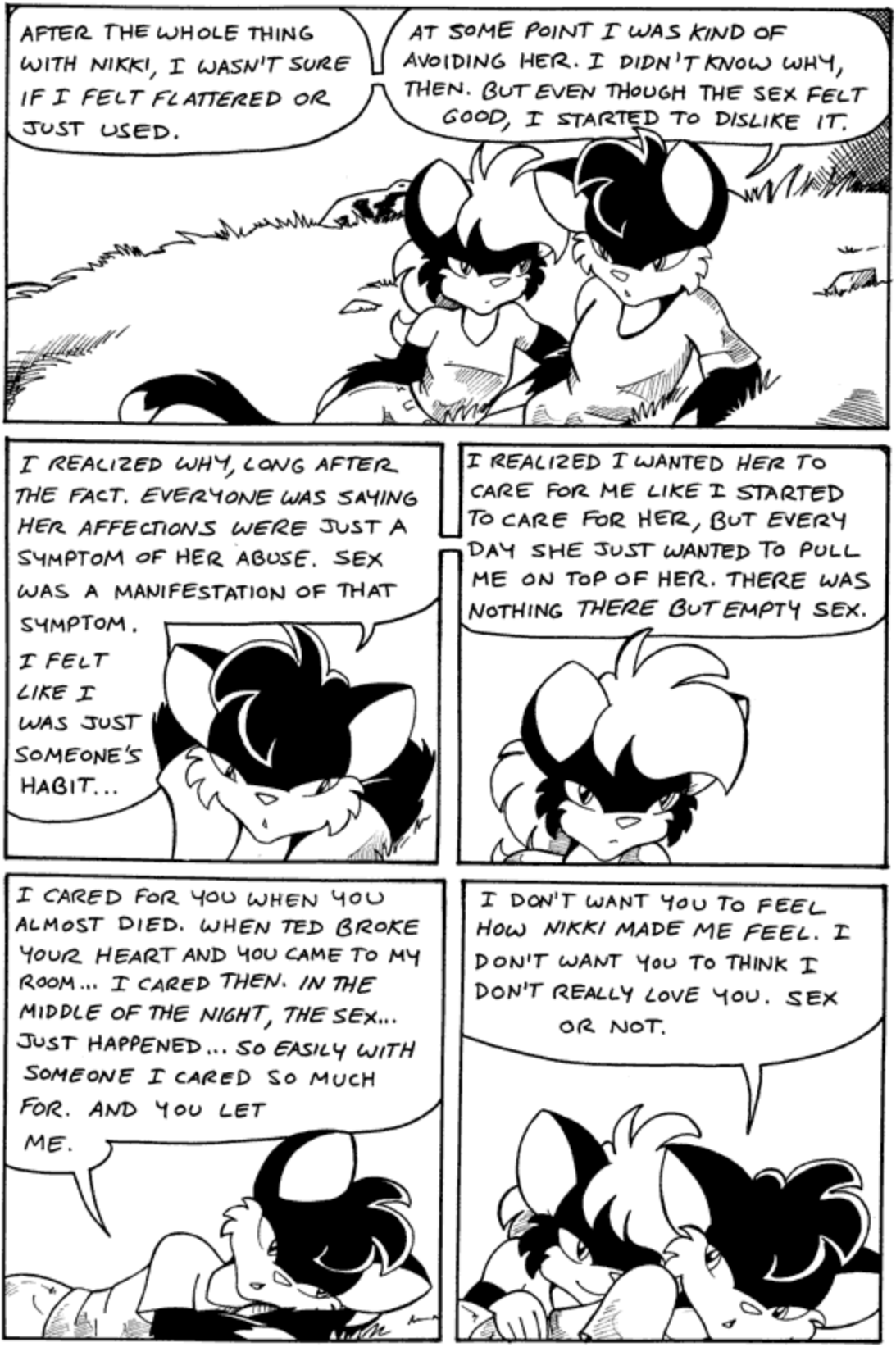


THAT WAS WRONG, HUH?

WRONG BY US?
SWING

I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS IT FEELS THAT WAY. WE DID SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE TO KEEP A SECRET.

WHAT KIND OF FEELINGS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME? EVEN IF I WASN'T YOUR SISTER?


AFTER THE WHOLE THING WITH NIKKI, I WASN'T SURE IF I FELT FLATTERED OR JUST USED.
AT SOME POINT I WAS KIND OF AVOIDING HER. I DIDN'T KNOW WHY, THEN. BUT EVEN THOUGH THE SEX FELT GOOD, I STARTED TO DISLIKE IT.
I REALIZED WHY, LONG AFTER THE FACT. EVERYONE WAS SAYING HER AFFECTIONS WERE JUST A SYMPTOM OF HER ABUSE. SEX WAS A MANIFESTATION OF THAT SYMPTOM.
I FELT LIKE I WAS JUST SOMEONE'S HABIT...
I REALIZED I WANTED HER TO CARE FOR ME LIKE I STARTED TO CARE FOR HER, BUT EVERY DAY SHE JUST WANTED TO PULL ME ON TOP OF HER. THERE WAS NOTHING THERE BUT EMPTY SEX.
I CARED FOR YOU WHEN YOU ALMOST DIED. WHEN TED BROKE YOUR HEART AND YOU CAME TO MY ROOM... I CARED THEN. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, THE SEX... JUST HAPPENED... SO EASILY WITH SOMEONE I CARED SO MUCH FOR. AND YOU LET ME.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL HOW NIKKI MADE ME FEEL. I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK I DON'T REALLY LOVE YOU. SEX OR NOT.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, FISK. THIS IS OUR LAST SESSION UNLESS THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE GOING ON YOU'D LIKE TO DISCUSS.
NO. I GUESS I'M FINE. THANK YOU MRS. HOLLINGS.
THE END

WUM
WUM WUM
WUM
WUM
WUM
OFF BALLANCE!
BAM
BAM
BAM
!
FEDERAL EXPRESS
SQUIRRRRP...
BRAWNY PAPER TOWELS... FOR THOSE EXTRA SLOPPY WET MESSES THAT NEED BRAWNY'S MANLY TOUCH...
OH YEAH, USE HIM LIKE A CHEAP RAG YOU FILTHY WHORE.
BLUE BELL

MMM.
GNARMM.
MUNCH
MOM. MY FAVORITE SHIRT HAS A RIP IN THE HE-
CHRIST BOY! GO PUT ON YOUR DAMNED SHIRT! THIS IS A HOUSEHOLD, NOT A BROTHEL!
DON'T GO DOWNSTAIRS. I THINK AUNT FLOW IS IN TOWN.

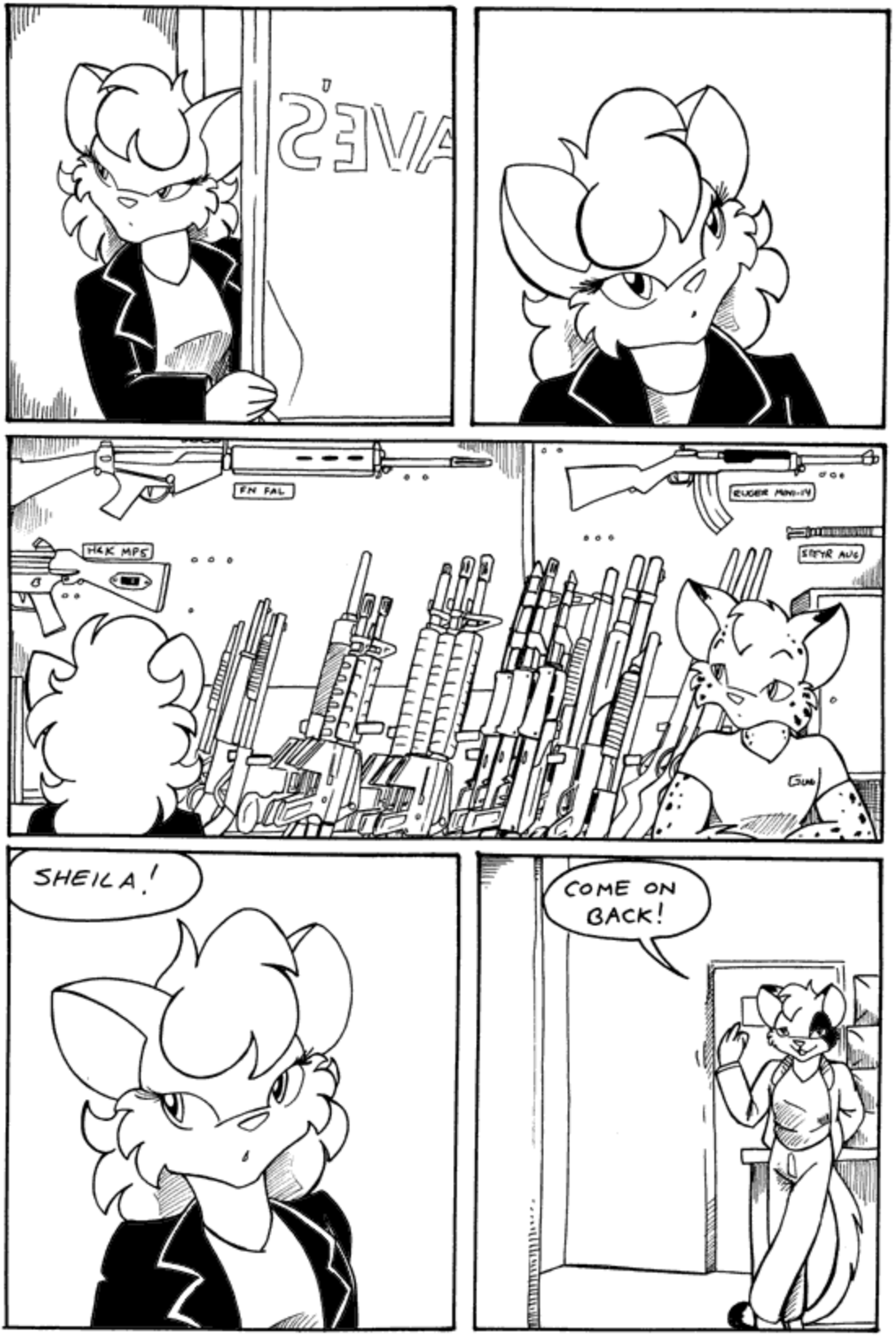
I THINK I'M LOSING MY MIND, KELLY.
OH?
I'M SO TENSE. I YELLED AT FISK YESTERDAY, FOR HARDLY ANY REASON.
YOU SPEND ALL DAY IN THAT HOUSE, LATELY. I KNOW I'D GET A BAD CASE OF CABIN FEVER.
MAYBE YOU NEED A VACATION?
OR A MAN.
OH! SINCE YOU PUT IT THAT WAY! HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN, DEAR?
SINCE HARVE...
OH MY GOD!

ARE YOU NERVOUS ABOUT DATING AGAIN?
SORT OF. I GUESS I'M AFRAID THE INVESTMENT WON'T YEILD A GOOD RETURN, YOU KNOW?
I'M NOT YOUNG ANYMORE. EVERY YEAR IT GETS A LITTLE HARDER TO STAY IN SHAPE. I CAN'T WASTE TIME FROM MAN TO MAN.
AND WHAT IF ONE OF THEM TURNS OUT TO BE... YOU KNOW...
A CREEP.
I KNOW A FEW TRUSTWORTHY BACHELORS. LETS GET YOU HOOKED UP!
OH...

IF YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT THE "CREEPS" YOU CAN LOOK INTO SELF DEFENSE COURSES, MARTIAL ARTS, MAYBE A GUN FOR THE HOME...
WHO'S GOING TO TRAIN SOME HOMEBOUND MOTHER?
WHY DON'T YOU ASK SAM?
SAM?
SAMUEL TOBS, YOUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR? HE TRAINS COBB COUNTY POLICE.
HE'S GOOD FRIENDS WITH MY HUSBAND AND THEY'VE BOTH TAUGHT ME A FEW THINGS. FISK AND HIS SON ARE ALWAYS HANGING OUT TOGETHER. I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT MORE FAMILIAR WITH THEM.
I DON'T KNOW. HIS WIFE GIVES ME A BAD VIBE WHEN I'M NEAR BY, AND THEY'RE ALWAYS FIGHTING.
TRUE. SHE DOES HAVE A CERTAIN "SHREWY" QUALITY.

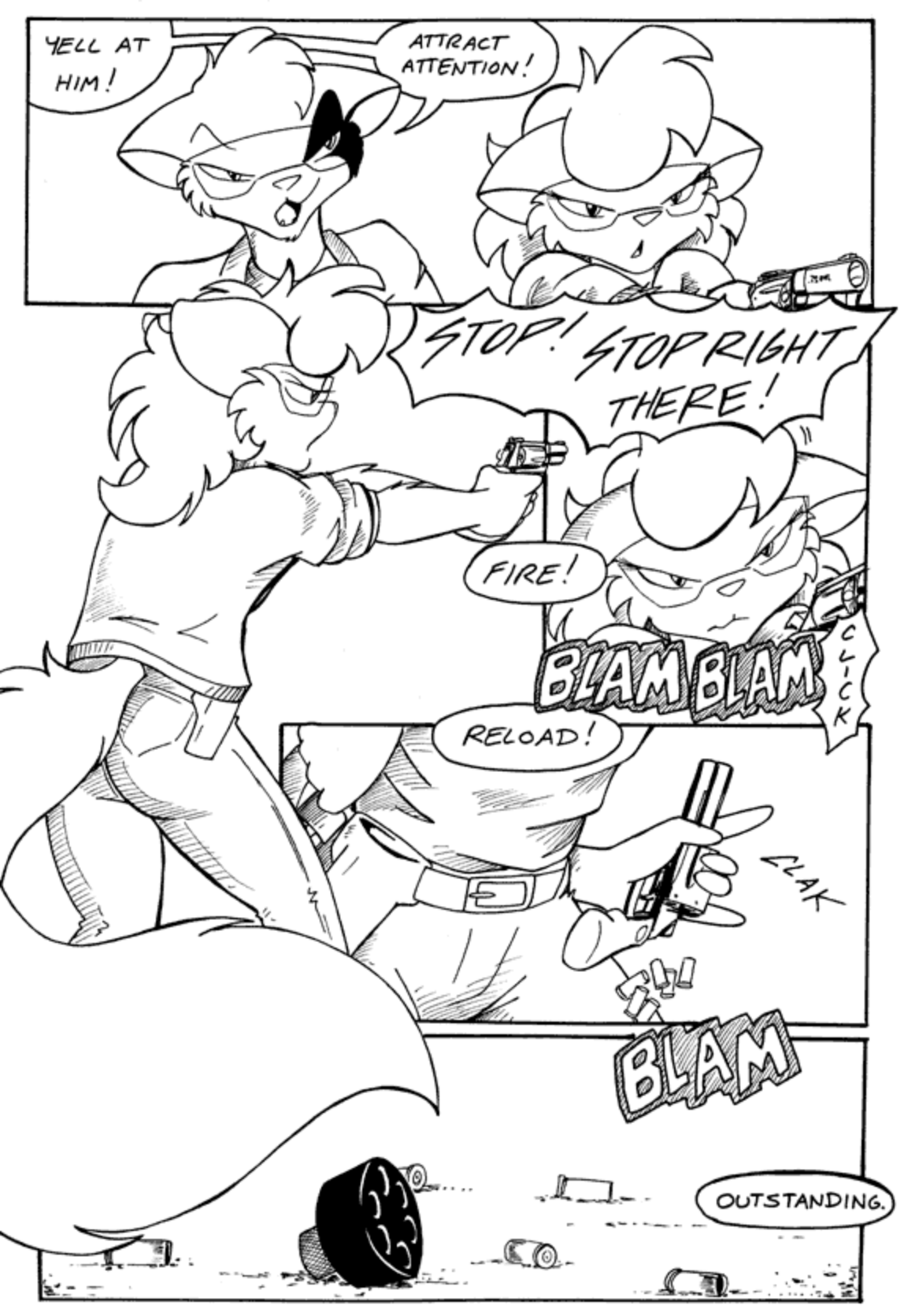
HEY BOYS.
HEY DAD. CAN I HAVE SOME DOUGH SO I CAN HIT THE ARCADE THIS AFTER-NOON?
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW YOUR MOTHER FEELS ABOUT THOSE VIOLENT GAMES, RYAN.
YEAH. I KNOW.
HERE'S A TWENTY. TELL HER YOU WENT TO THE MALL OR SOMETHING.
AWESOME. THANKS, DAD.

GOOD MORNING, SAM.
RAKE RAKE
OH, GOOD MORNING, SHEILA.
UM... HI.
SWISH
KELLY TELLS ME YOU GIVE PERSONAL SELF DEFENSE AND FIREARM INSTRUCTION AS A SIDE BUSINESS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WELL, THAT'S A BIG RESPONSIBILITY. IT'S NOT SOMETHING TO TAKE LIGHTLY...
... BUT... WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS THE BEST PLACE TO TALK IT OVER. I'LL BE AT DAVE'S GUNROOM AFTER 3 TOMMOROW IF YOU'RE STILL SERIOUS.


AVE'S
FN FAL
RUGER MINI-14
H&K MP5
STEYR AUG
SHEILA!
COME ON BACK!

I SUPPOSE THE FIRST THING I SHOULD ASK IS WHY YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THIS?
WELL...
FIVE YEARS AGO... I WAS RAPED. IT WAS IN MY OWN HOUSE. MY SON WOKE UP AND STOPPED IT WITH A BAT...
I DON'T EVER WANT TO FEEL THAT HELPLESS AGAIN.
I'M SORRY.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. BUT I HAVEN'T DATED SINCE. AND...
... I REALIZE I HAVE A SECURITY AND A TRUST CONCERN.
IF YOU WERE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION AGAIN, COULD YOU BRING YOURSELF TO USE DEADLY FORCE?
I DON'T THINK I'D HAVE A PROBLEM.

JUST LIKE WE PRACTICED.
JUST KEEP YOUR SIGHTS LINED UP ON THE TARGET AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THE TRIGGER.
DON'T ANTICIPATE THE SHOT AND JUST STAY FOCUSED ON THOSE SIGHTS...
BLAM!
PIFF!
GOOD. GO AHEAD AND SHOOT OUT THE REST OF THE CHAMBERS.

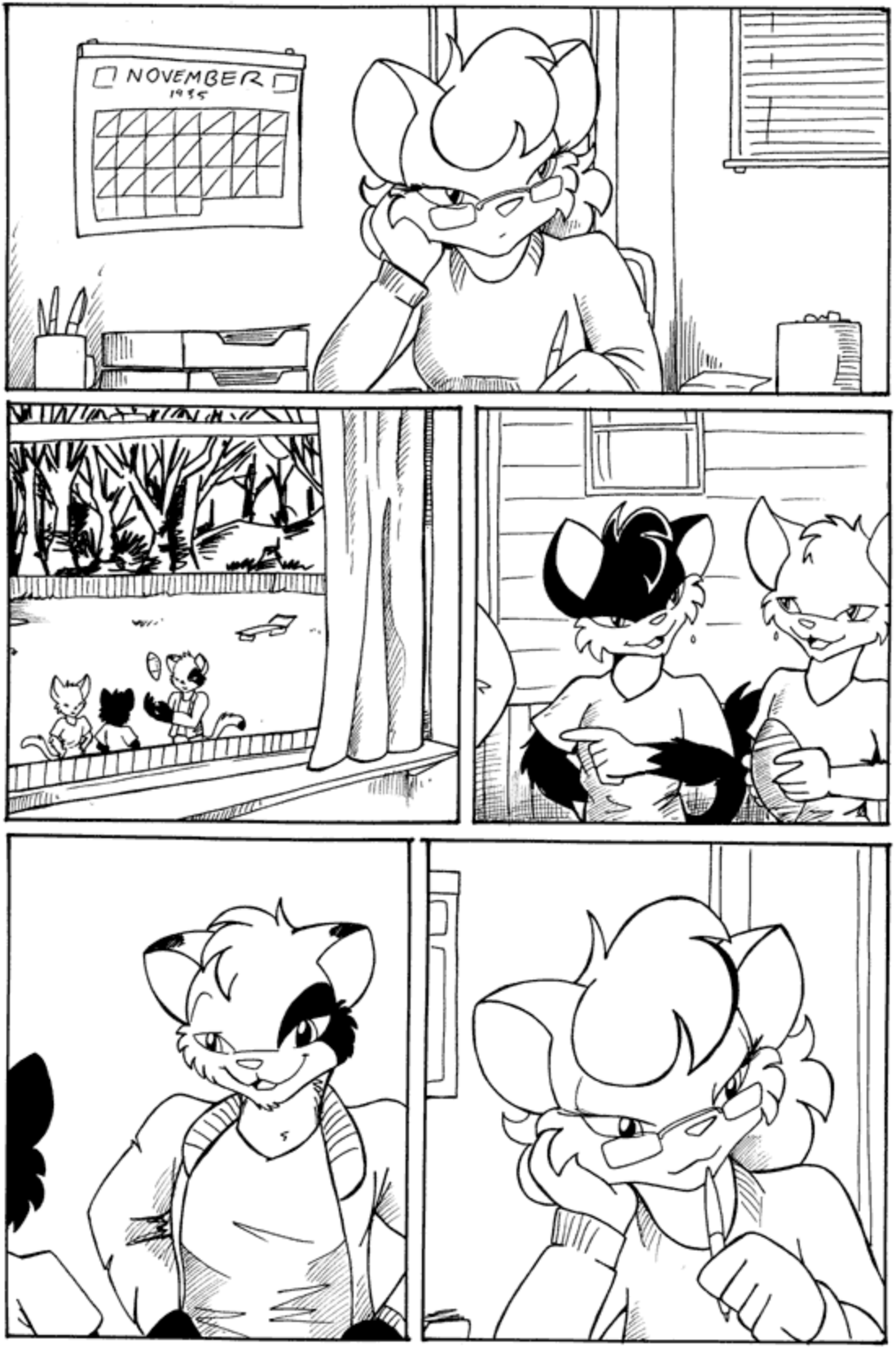

YELL AT HIM!
ATTRACT ATTENTION!
STOP! STOP RIGHT THERE!
FIRE!
BLAM BLAM
CLICK
RELOAD!
CLAK
BLAM
OUTSTANDING.

THAT'S GOOD. COLLECT YOUR TARGET AND TAKE A BREAK.
BEEP BEEP BEEP
YOUR GUNBAG IS BEEPING.
YEAH? OH HI, HONEY.
POP!
MMHM. YEAH. ABOUT SEVEN, TONIGHT.
I'M WITH A CLIENT. UH HUH, SHOOTING.
WHAT'S IT MATTER?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!

YES. I'M AT THE RANGE. YES, I'M GETTING PAID.
NO.
NO! I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION!
OH, I LOVE THE COUCH! IT'S QUIETER AND WARMER!
SHIT!
CLACK!
ZIIIIIIP!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'LL LIVE.
NEXT WEEK WE'LL BE AT THE GYM. I'LL GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS.

YOUR DINNER'S IN THE FRIDGE. RYAN AND I ALREADY ATE.
OKAY. THANKS.

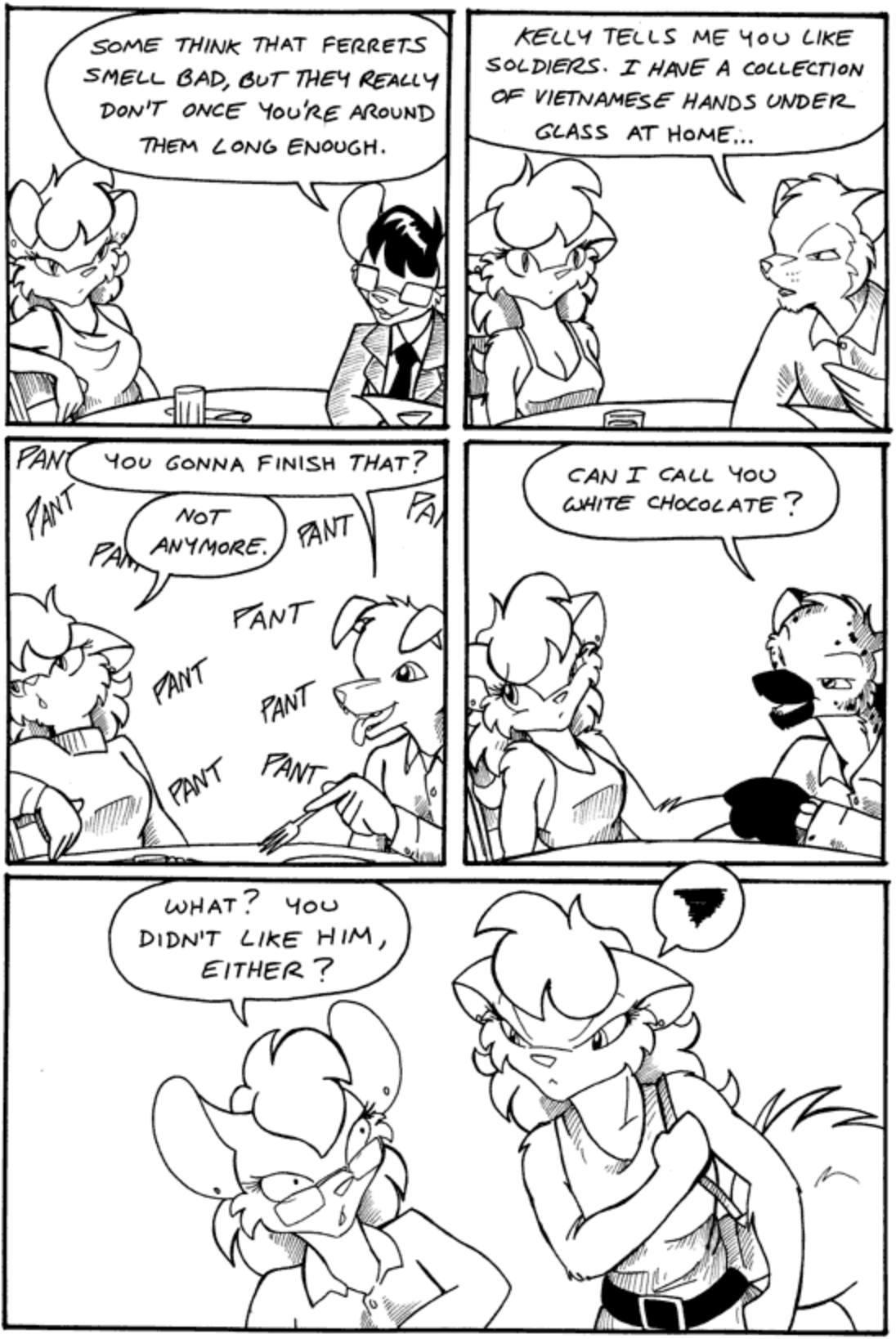
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
UFF!
INTERCEPTION! WOO!
BAH!


NOVEMBER
1995

HELLO MR. TOBS.
OH, HEY SHEILA.
CAN I HAVE MY SON BACK? HE NEEDS TO EAT DINNER.
YOU MAY WANT TO THROW HIM INTO THE SHOWER, FIRST.
WHAT ARE WE HAVING?
CHICKEN, RICE, COLLARDS, AND-
POTATOES?
MMHM.
GROWL!

SHEILA? YOO-HOOOO!?
BOO?
YEEEK!
OH GOD... YOU SCARED ME, SAM.
I MEAN KELLY!

SAM?
SHEILA!
ER...
NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT... I MEAN, I'VE JUST BEEN TRAINING SO MUCH, YOU KNOW?
SIP
THEN YOU'RE READY TO DATE! THAT'S GOOD BECAUSE I BROUGHT A LIST!
LIST?


SOME THINK THAT FERRETS SMELL BAD, BUT THEY REALLY DON'T ONCE YOU'RE AROUND THEM LONG ENOUGH.
KELLY TELLS ME YOU LIKE SOLDIERS. I HAVE A COLLECTION OF VIETNAMESE HANDS UNDER GLASS AT HOME...
PANT
YOU GONNA FINISH THAT?
NOT ANYMORE.
PANT
CAN I CALL YOU WHITE CHOCOLATE?
WHAT? YOU DIDN'T LIKE HIM, EITHER?

HMMM.

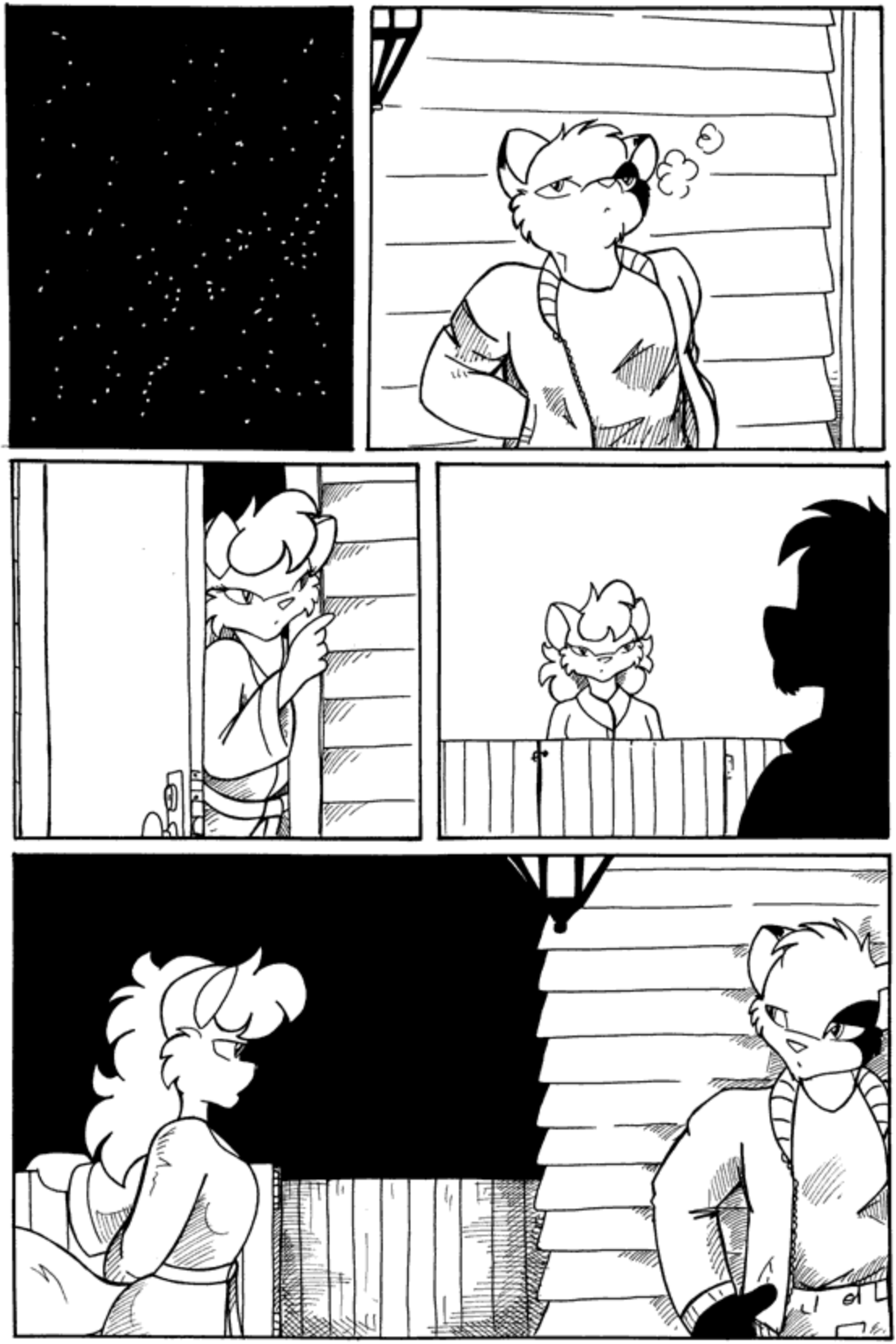
SAM? IT'S TWO IN THE MORNING. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HEY SHEILA. JUST HAVING A HARD TIME SLEEPING.
I HEARD YOU FIGHTING, TONIGHT.
YEAH, SORRY. IT'S BEEN A PRETTY BAD MONTH. IT'LL PROBABLY GET BETTER.
IT ALWAYS DOES. I JUST USUALLY NEED SOME TIME ALONE. TO THINK. TO CALM DOWN.
AS LONG AS I DON'T SAY OR DO ANYTHING RASH, IT'LL BE FINE.

THERE'S JUST SO MUCH THAT SETS HER OFF. I WALK ON EGG-SHELLS. SHE HATES MY JOB. SHE HATES MY HOURS.
WE DISAGREE ON HOW TO RAISE RYAN. SHE'S ACCUSED ME OF HAVING AFFAIRS.
BUT, WE HANG IN THERE FOR RYAN.
SHE'D KILL ME IF SHE KNEW I WAS UP AND TALKING TO YOU...
IN FACT, I SHOULD HEAD IN SOON, IN CASE SHE WAKES UP.
WELL, IF IT MATTERS TO YOU... I THINK YOU'RE A GOOD MAN AND A GOOD FATHER.

SKKK
I REALLY SHOULD GO. I'LL HAVE TO TALK TO YOU, LATER.

BLAM
BLAM
TIME?
YO! SAM!
OH, SHIT! SORRY JERRY. I SPACED...
BEEP!
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT, AGAIN.
YOU'VE BEEN SPACED ALL DAY. WHAT'S UP?

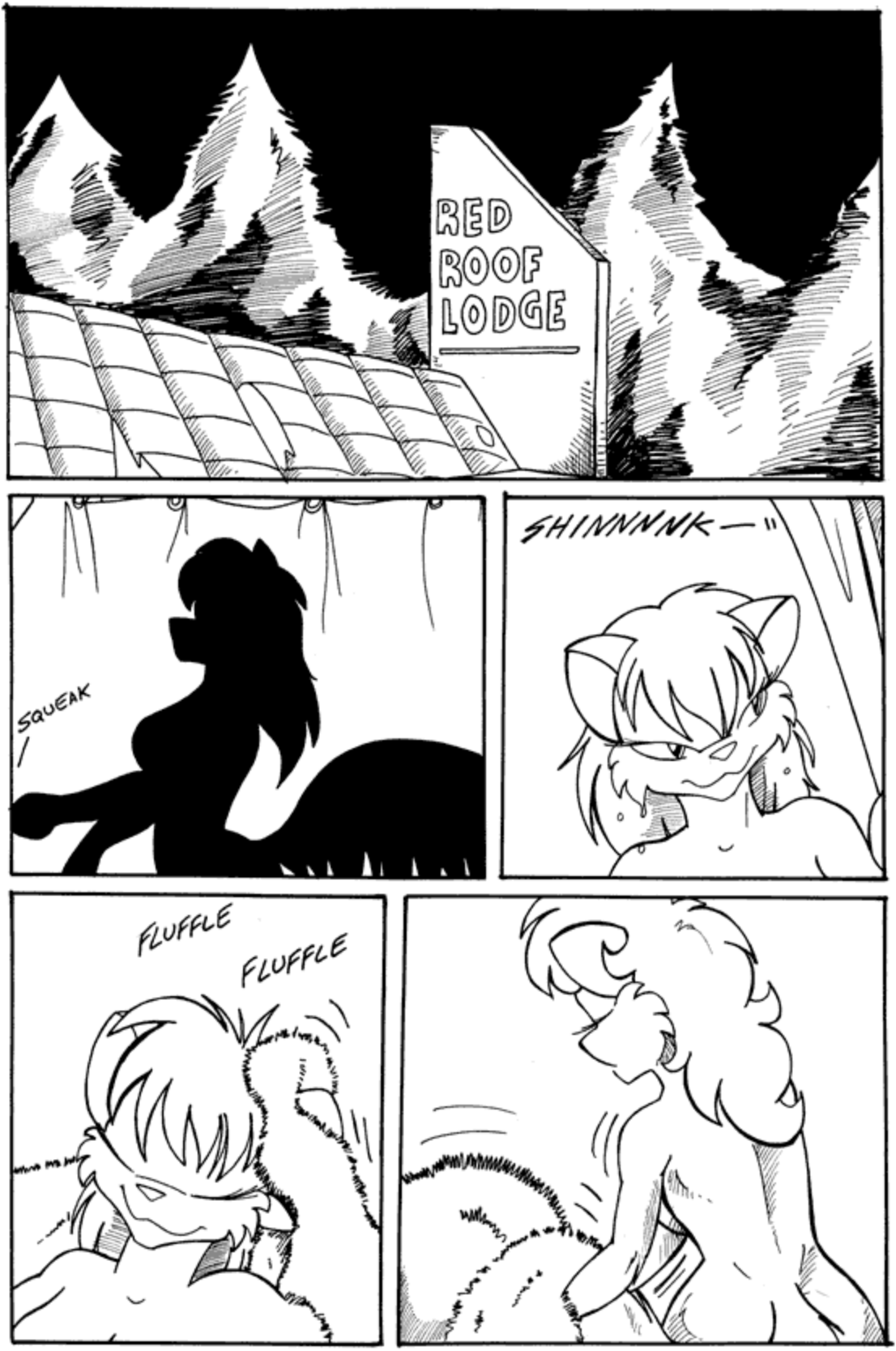
HOME TROUBLES?
CLUNK
I GUESS IT'S OBVIOUS. IT'S BEEN PRETTY BAD LATELY.
I'M GETTING TIRED OF IT, JERRY. IT'S GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE THE IRRATIONAL AND PARANOID DELUSIONS ARE THE NORM. I MISS THE AFFECTIONATE WOMAN I MARRIED.
I'M WONDERING IF THE SITUATION IS SALVAGEABLE.
WELL, WHATEVER YOU DO, KEEP RYAN IN MIND. YOUR KIDS ARE YOUR GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY. DON'T BLOW IT.



IT'S COLD OUT HERE.
SHEILA...
IF YOU NEED TO BE AWAY...
AT LEAST COME IN OUT OF THE COLD.

WHOA, SOMETHING SMELLS GOOD!
WHAT ARE YOU COOKING?
BREAKFAST!
MOM HASN'T MADE US BREAKFAST IN YEARS! SOMETHING'S GOTTEN INTO HER...
YOU'RE TELLING ME!

HEY, IT'S SNOWING OUTSIDE.
MMM. IT'S PRETTY.
FISK. HAVE YOU NOTICED A CHANGE IN MOM, LATELY?
SHE'S HAPPIER.
SHE WAS ASKING ME FOR OUTFIT ADVICE A FEW DAYS AGO.
SHE'S BEEN COOKING LIKE CRAZY! I SAW HER WITH RIBS THIS MORNING.
YOU NOTICE ANYTHING WRONG?
IF EATING LIKE THIS EVERY DAY IS WRONG, WHO WANTS TO BE RIGHT?


RED ROOF LODGE
SQUEAK
SHINNNK—"
FLUFFLE
FLUFFLE

MMM. YOU'RE PENSIVE.
OH, JUST THINKING ABOUT THE FAMILY. THE FUTURE...
IT'S GETTING COLDER AT HOME. I'M WONDERING WHICH ONE OF US WILL ASK FOR DIVORCE, FIRST.
IT FEELS LIKE ADMITTING FAILURE.
HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL ABOUT US?
YOU'RE THE ONLY THING THAT KEEPS ME GOING.

IT'S ABOUT TIME.
CLIK!
DAMN, MR. TOBS. WHERE'D YOU RUN INTO A WHITE GODDESS LIKE THAT...
CLIK! CLIK!

MMM.
HMM. WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU GOING, NOW?
?
KNOTSNATCHER
CANINE EROTIC DANCING
WIXXX LOVIN' BITCHES

HEY! OFFICER TOBS! HOW LONG'S IT BEEN?
I'M NOT A DETECTIVE ANYMORE, SEDRICK.
FINALLY LEAVE THE OL' LADY?
'CAUSE I KNOW SOME FINE CAT-LEANIN' BITCHES—
NAW! I'M BEING FOLLOWED. I JUST NEED TO SLIP OUT THE BACK.

EXIT
MMM.
HMM, OUT BACK. SLIPPING OUT BACK. WHAT THE HELL IS OUT BACK?
HE CAN'T BE DIPPING INTO HOOKERS AFTER A DAY LIKE THAT.

OH SHI-!!
SHOVE
THUD!
WHO ARE YOU!? WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME?

YOU CAN TALK OR YOU CAN LEAVE HERE IN AN AMBULANCE!
WHOA! HEY, I'M JUST YOUR ORDINARY P.I.!
PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR?
YOU THINK SHEILA BLACK IS THE ONLY WOMAN INTERESTED IN HOW YOU SPEND YOUR SPARE TIME?
I'VE GOT NOTHIN' AGAINST YOU, MAN. IT'S JUST MY JOB TO MAKE IT EASY FOR YOUR WIFE'S LAWYER.

NOT SO FAST. GIVE ME YOUR CAMERA.
GIVE IT A REST. IT'S TOO LATE.
I'VE ALREADY MET WITH YOUR WIFE THIS MORNING. SHE KNOWS EVERYTHING. ALL I'M DOING NOW IS BUILDING HER LAWYER'S CASE.
I'D WORRY MORE ABOUT GETTING YOUR LIFE TOGETHER INSTEAD OF ROUGHING ME UP.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT GETTING FISK AND I LEARNER'S PERMITS, THIS YEAR?
I'VE BEEN TRYING NOT TO.
AWW, C'MON.
WE'LL SEE, HONEY.
CLIK CLIK CLIK
CLIK C
IF IT HELPS, I'M A LITTLE MORE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR BROTHER DRIVING...

SMACK
MOM!?
T-TAKE THE GROCERIES INTO THE H-HOUSE, LUCY... NOW!

I GOT SOME BAD NEWS TODAY, FISK.
WHAT'S UP?
MY MOM SAYS SHE'S LEAVING MY DAD.
SHE WANTS TO TAKE ME BACK UP TO BOSTON WITH HER.
BOSTON!?
WHAT THE HELL FOR? YOU CAN'T LIVE WITH YOUR DAD?
WELL, SHE'LL GET CUSTODY. IT'S NOT AN EVEN SPLIT SINCE SHE CAUGHT MY DAD CHEATING ON HER...
SHIT.
... WITH YOUR MOM.
THIS IS NO TIME FOR JOKES LIKE THAT!

GODDAMMIT!
BAM
IT'S BAD ENOUGH ADULTS CAN'T LIVE BY THEIR OWN RULES. NOW I HAVE TO LOSE MY BEST FRIEND BECAUSE OF IT?!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY WOULD DO THIS...
I'VE HAD A FRONT ROW SEAT TO HOW SELFISH ADULTS CAN BE FOR A WHILE, NOW.
THIS DOESN'T SURPRISE ME.

SIGH.
CLIK
=SNF=
OH GOD...

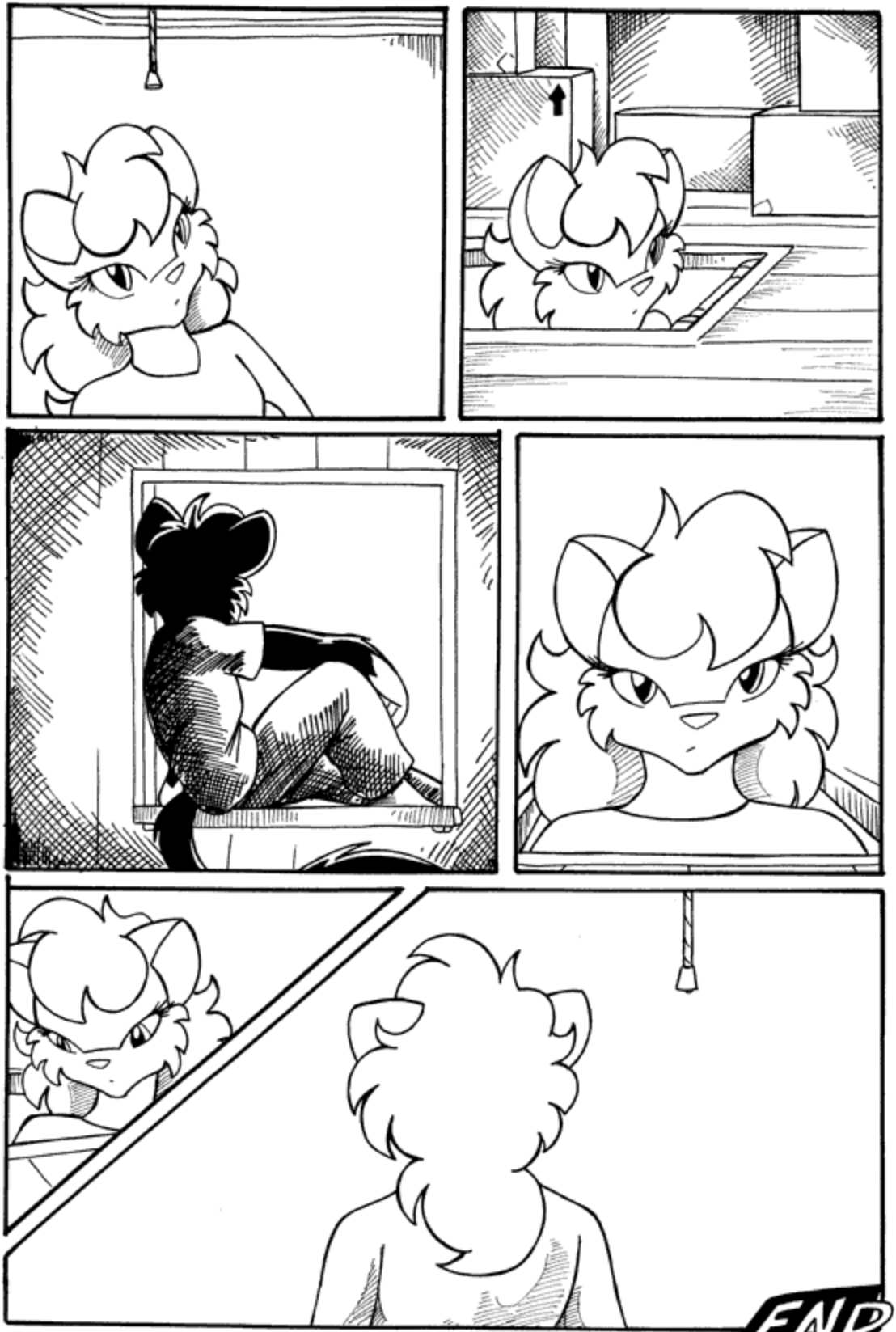
FISK! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
DON'T START WITH ME, LUCY.
YOU'RE THAT UPSET OVER WHAT SHE DID?
YES. I'M LOSING MY BEST FRIEND AS A RESULT.
HOW COULD SHE KNOW THAT WOULD HAPPEN? EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES.
NO, LUCY. A "MISTAKE" IS WHEN YOU FUCK UP A MATH PROBLEM AT SCHOOL!
THERE'S TOO MUCH EFFORT AND PLANNING THAT GOES INTO HAVING AN AFFAIR TO CALL IT A "MISTAKE"!

OKAY, MAYBE SHE DID SOMETHING BAD AND SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT THINGS OUT MORE CAREFULLY...
...BUT SHE'S YOUR MOTHER. OUR FRIENDS WILL COME AND GO OUR WHOLE LIVES. BUT WE'LL ONLY EVER HAVE HER AS A MOTHER.
AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH OF A GRUDGE YOU TRY TO HOLD, YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH HER AS LONG AS YOU LIVE HERE!
BUT IF YOU JUST CAN'T, MAYBE YOU'LL ENJOY THE FACT THAT SHE'S DOWN THERE HURTING OVER WHAT SHE DID FAR MORE THAN YOU EVER WILL!
SLAM!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE.

I WON'T BE ABLE TO AFFORD THE HOUSE WHEN OUR ASSETS ARE SPLIT.
I'LL HAVE TO MOVE.
YOU COULD STAY WITH ME.
I WISH IT WAS THAT EASY.
IT'S NOT?
YOU HAVE TO THINK OF YOUR CHILDREN FIRST. FISK HATES ME RIGHT NOW. WORK WITH HIM BEFORE THRUSTING AN AWKWARD SITUATION ON HIM.
I'LL GET A PLACE NEAR BY. I WON'T GO FAR, I PROMISE.
IT'LL WORK IF WE WORK FOR IT. LETS NOT BE ANY MORE RASH THAN WE HAVE BEEN.

LUCY, WHERE'S YOUR BROTHER?
I THINK HE WENT TO THE ATTIC. HE GOES UP THERE TO THINK.
IS HE STILL UPSET?
I DON'T KNOW. HE MOSTLY LOOKED PENSIVE.


END

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YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANYONE SINCE TED. IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?
NO. IT'S NOT ABOUT TED.
I GUESS I'M JUST... CONTENT.
CONTENT IS FOR OLD FOLKS! YOU GOTTA LIVE, BABY! EVEN ELIZABETH IS GOIN' TO THE DANCE!
YOU ARE?
WELL, MY MOM'S MAKING ME GO WITH MARVIN LIPSCHITZ.
OH MY.
PLEASE. I NEED AS MANY OF MY FRIENDS THERE TO TAKE THE EDGE OFF...
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OH CRAP! IT'S HER!
OH SHIT! AND SHE'S WALKING RIGHT UP TO YOUR CAR!
WHAT'S WRONG? I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO TALK TO HER.
I'M NOT READY! TALK TO HER FOR ME! STALL HER!
DUDE...
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HI, FISK.
HEY, ELISE.
DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS FOR THE HALLOWEEN DANCE?
NOT REALLY...
MY SISTER'S LOOKING FOR A DATE AND I THOUGHT YOU SEEMED LIKE A QUIET, SWEET LITTLE GUY.
INTERESTED?
UM... SURE...
GREAT! I'LL LET HER KNOW! BYEEE!
HUH. I DIDN'T KNOW SHE HAD A SISTER.
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UM. I'M OKAY.
I'M SO GLAD I CAUGHT UP WITH YOU, TODAY!
I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TALK TO YOU.
OH, REALLY?
YEAH. MY NAME'S RANDY STEELWORTH. I SIT BEHIND YOU IN HOMEROOM.
I'VE HAD YOU ON MY MIND FOR A WHILE, NOW.
LOOK, I DON'T NORMALLY DO THIS, BUT... I'M LOOKIN' FOR A DATE TO THE HALLOWEEN DANCE...
AND YOU'RE QUIET BUT A SWEET LADY. I JUST HAVE A GOOD FEELING INSIDE WHEN I THINK ABOUT YOU. I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU TO THE DANCE.
OH! WELL...
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THANKS FOR TAKING ME SHOPPING!
DON'T MENTION IT.
I'VE STILL GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT TO WEAR FOR HALLOWEEN.
IT'S MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY! BUT I GUESS THAT'S NORMAL WHEN YOU'RE A WICCAN.
MY SISTER'S FAVORITE HOLIDAY IS CHRISTMAS.
I TRY TO TELL HER IT'S SO COMMERCIALIZED AND IT JUST GETS WORSE EVERY YEAR. BUT SHE'S YOUR USUAL PREPPY BUBBLE-HEAD SHEEP WHO BUYS INTO IT ALL...
OH, WAIT! WE GOTTA STOP BY SPENCER'S! I'VE BEEN MEANING TO BUY ONE OF THEIR CEREMONIAL WICCAN BLADES!
OR I COULD JUST SWERVE IN FRONT OF THAT SEMI AND END IT ALL...
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LUCY! HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
RANDY'S HOUSE.
I WAS TALKING TO ANDREA. SHE'S UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT RANDY IS HER BOYFRIEND.
IT SOUNDS LIKE SHE NEEDS TO GET OVER HIM.
WELL, WHAT IF HE'S LYING? TO THE BOTH OF YOU?
WHAT IF SHE'S LYING!? WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM WITH RANDY? DO YOU HAVE TO TRY TO RUIN MY GOOD TIME!?
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EEHEE! MMP! RANDY...
YES, MY LADY?
TELL ME...
... AM I YOUR GIRL? I HAVE TO KNOW, FIRST...
NONE OTHER, MY SWEET LADY.
MMM!
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HOW ARE YOU AND SHEILA GETTING ALONG?
VERY WELL. SHE'S—
DADDY!
WHAT'S WRONG, PUMPKIN?
AFTER THE DANCE, I'M GOING TO STOP SEEING MARVIN! I'M GOING TO GO OUT WITH FISK, AND I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU OR MOM THINK!
OKAY, PUMPKIN. HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR MOTHER?
COULD YOU TELL HER FOR ME, PLEASE?
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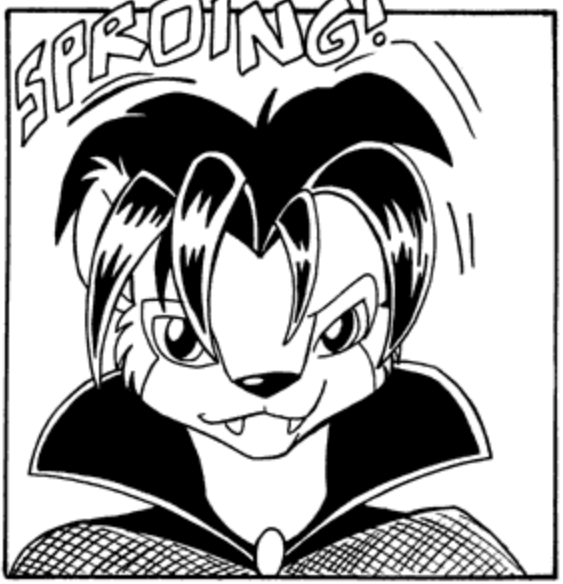

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WHERE'S RANDY?
LATE AS USUAL. IT'S NORMAL FOR HIM.
HEY! THERE'S ELIZABETH! AND THAT GUY MUST BE MARV—
... OH MY GOD!
SIGH...
BLINK
BLINK
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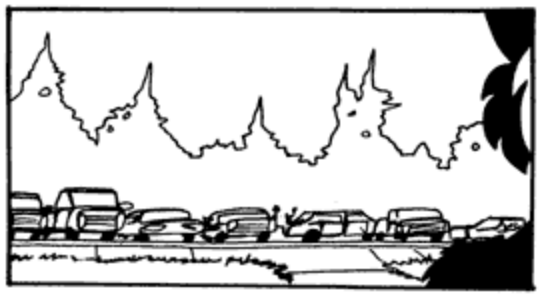

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YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE GOING TO YOUR MOTHER'S PARTY!
I WAS! I WANTED YOU TO BE THERE, BUT YOU SAID...
WHAT? I COULDN'T MAKE IT, SO YOU TAKE SOME OTHER GIRL!? BEHIND MY BACK!? I KNEW I'D FIND YOU HERE, RANDY!
CRIKEY, LOVE! SHE WANTED TO GO WITH ME! IT'S ONLY FOR ONE NIGHT, JUST TO MAKE HER HAPPY...
IS THAT HER?
CRIKEY...
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WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?
GET OVER HIM, ALREADY!
MY PROBLEM?!
WHAT HAVE YOU TOLD HER, RANDY!?
DAMMIT.!
I'M GOING INSIDE. YA'LL WORK THIS OUT BETWEEN YOURSELVES.
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FUCK FUCK FUCK.
DON'T TELL ME THIS IS HAPPENING AGAIN. CAN I JUST FIND A NORMAL GUY?
WHAT IF ELIZABETH IS RIGHT? WHAT IF HE'S A HUGE FAKE? JUST A REALLY GOOD ONE?
I CAN'T BE THAT STUPID TWICE. MAYBE I SHOULD GO BACK AND HEAR WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT...
I HOPE HE'S NOT BUSY.
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST GO HOME. I'D NEED TO GET A RIDE FROM FISK.
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HE'S REALLY A GREAT GUY WHEN YOU'RE WITH HIM. HE CAN SAY ALL THE RIGHT THINGS, AND MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE THE MOST SPECIAL GIRL IN THE WORLD.
IF YOU DON'T MIND HIM SEEING OTHERS, I SUPPOSE HE'D BE PERFECT. IF YOU DON'T MIND LETTING HIM CHEAT ON ANDREA WITH YOU.
WAIT. YOU DATED RANDY?
HE WAS MY FIRST BOYFRIEND WHEN I WAS A FRESHMAN. HE'S BEEN UP TO THE SAME STUNTS AS LONG AS I'VE KNOWN HIM.
IT'S PROBABLY WHY I'M NOW A LESBIAN.
SO, I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH...
WAIT A MINUTE!!
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HONK
HONK
HONK
HONK
LUCY!
LUCY, LISTEN...!
I WANT TO BE ALONE, RANDY!
PLEASE, LUCY! STOP! I NEED TO TELL HOW I REALLY FEEL...
LOOK AT ME! PLEASE, I NEED YOU TO HEAR ME!
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YAWN
ANYONE HOME?
KIDS,
I'M SPENDING HALLOWEEN NIGHT WITH MR. TOBS. YOU CAN CALL ME AT 867-8310 IF YOU NEED ANYTHING. I WILL SEE YOU TOMMOROW AND BE GOOD!
LOVE,
MOM
LUCY?
KNOCK KNOCK
HMMM.
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FISK!
FISK!
ZZM...
WAKE UP!
HRF
YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME!
YEESH. WHAT TIME DID YOU GET IN LAST NIGHT?
I... ACTUALLY JUST GOT IN.
OH MY GOD...
FISK!
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OKAY, OKAY. CALM DOWN. TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.
WELL, I WAS UPSET ABOUT RANDY NOT SHOWING UP ON TIME WHEN I RAN INTO HIM AND ANDREA IN THE PARKING LOT, FIGHTING.
I THINK HE'S BEEN LYING TO HER. I LEFT PRETTY UPSET AND WENT TO WALK HOME.
RANDY CAUGHT UP WITH ME ON THE ROAD. HE EXPLAINED HOW HE AND ANDREA HAD RECONCILED THINGS...
HE WANTED TO MAKE MY EVENING RIGHT, AGAIN. HE WENT ALL OUT, PUTTING SO MUCH EFFORT INTO MY HAPPINESS THAT NIGHT. I FELT REALLY APPRECIATED...
I ENDED UP SPENDING THE NIGHT AT HIS HOME, SLIPPING IN AFTER HIS PARENTS WERE ASLEEP.
MY GOD! HE RIPS OUT GIRLS' HEARTS AND STILL GETS LAID? MAN, HE MUST BE THE "'TANG WHISPERER" OR SOMETHING...
I'M NOT FINISHED!
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YOU SEE, I ALWAYS MAKE RANDY WEAR A RUBBER...
HOW THOUGHTFUL.
LAST NIGHT WASN'T ANY DIFFERENT. I TOLD HIM TO PUT IT ON.
HE WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS, BUT IT WAS DARK.
I WOKE UP BEFORE HE DID AND NOTICED THE TWO RUBBERS HE'D HAD WITH HIM WERE STILL ON THE NIGHT STAND.
I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT IT MUCH UNTIL, IN THE BATHROOM, I NOTICED STUFF... WELL, COMING OUT OF ME.
?
STUFF THAT WASN'T MINE...
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THAT SELFISH JERK! CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT!?
THAT DOES SINK TO A NEW LOW LEVEL OF PURE SLIME. I GUESS IT'S A GOOD THING YOU'RE ON THE PILL.
HE DOESN'T KNOW THAT!
OKAY, OKAY! WHAT DO YOU NEED MY HELP WITH?
HE COULD HAVE GIVEN ME SOMETHING WORSE THAN KITTENS!
ER...
YOU NEED TO TAKE ME TO DR. VALISK, AND NOT TELL MOM...
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EVERYTHING SEEMS FINE, LUCY. IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS, LET ME KNOW.
COME BACK IN A MONTH TO BE EXTRA SURE.
THE LADY AT THE FRONT WILL TAKE CASH IF YOU DON'T WANT TO USE YOUR MOTHER'S INSURANCE.
THANKS.
EVERYTHING OKAY?
FUCK, NO!
I NEED TO GET BACK AT THAT PIECE OF SHIT!
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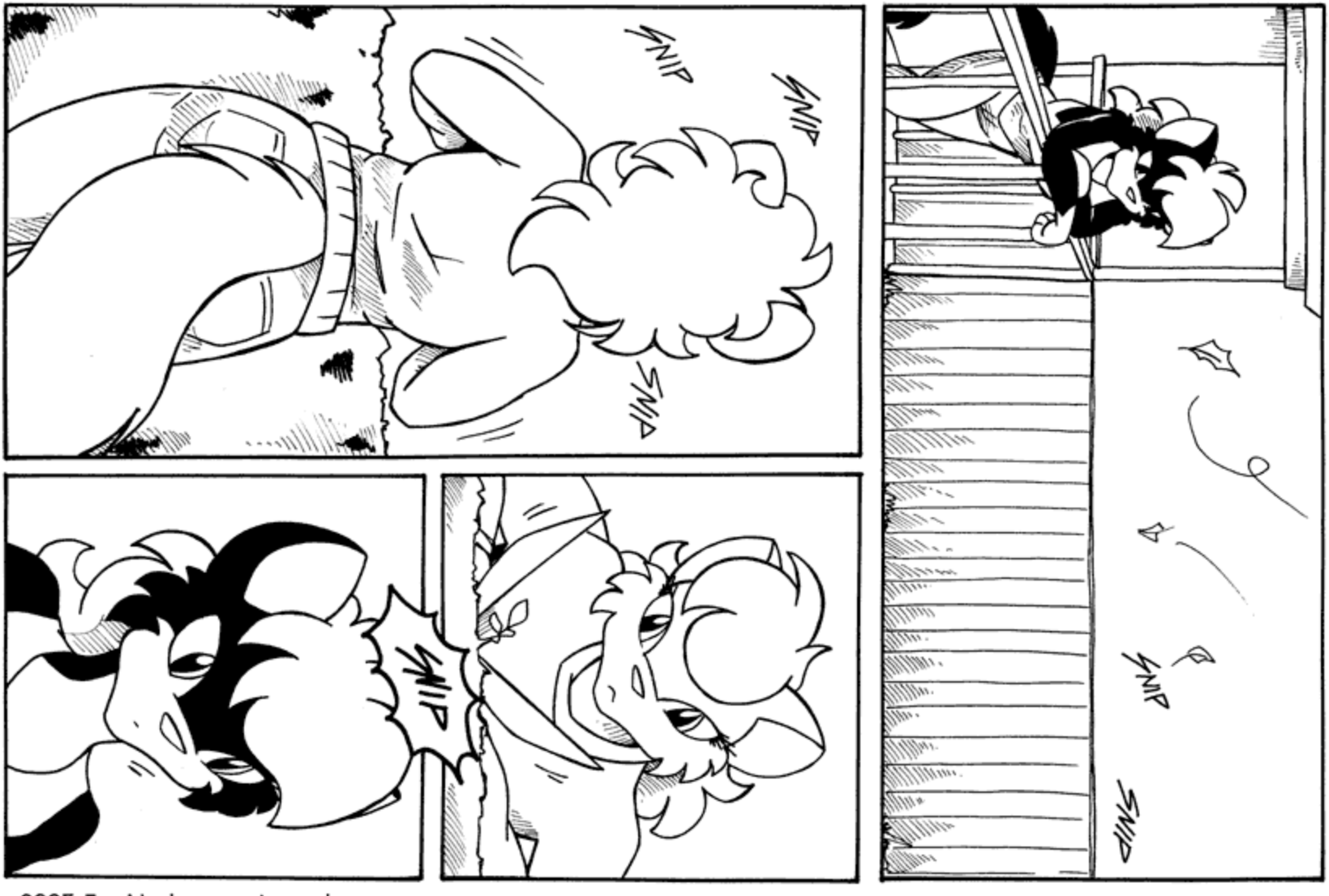

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FISK! WAKE UP! FISK!
MMF.
I GOT THAT LITTLE FUCK! I GOT HIM TO SLEEP, CUT IT OFF AND GOT IT RIGHT HERE!
FUCKING AWESOME!
SHAKE SHAKE
THAT BETTER NOT BE WHAT I THINK IT IS!
WHAT?
IT'S JUST HIS HAIR.
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LUCY. I SAW WHAT YOU DID TO RANDY.
HE'S LUCKY THAT'S ALL I CUT OFF.
HE'S REALLY UPSET. HE WEARS A HAT ALL THE TIME NOW, EVEN TO BED. I DON'T GET THE IMPRESSION HE HATES YOU, THOUGH...
IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER.
I KNOW. HE LEFT A MESSAGE ON OUR ANSWERING MACHINE OF HIM SINGING "ALWAYS SOMETHING THERE TO REMIND ME", AND MY MOM HEARD IT!
WAIT... ARE YOU STILL GOING OUT WITH THAT CORNY SHITHEAD?
LOOK, HE'S A GREAT PERSON WHEN HE'S NOT ACTING OUT. I THINK, IN THE END, HE MAY CHANGE. IT'LL BE A LOT BETTER WHEN HE DOES.
I GOTTA GO.
* SIGH *
END
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ALL PACKED?
YEAH.
WHY DO YOU SOUND SO DOWN?
WE BARELY KNEW OUR GRANDAD.
IT'S NOT THAT. I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHAT I'M GOING TO DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL. I'M TOTALLY LOST.
WHAT ABOUT COLLEGE?
TO STUDY WHAT? THE THOUGHT OF MORE AIMLESS SCHOOLING NAUSEATES ME.
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FISK! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
USING THE WALL.
IT'S CLEANER THAN THE MEN'S ROOM.
UNZIP!
HERE, ZIP THIS UP. YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THAT.
REZIP!
GO USE THE LADIES' ROOM. I'LL STAND GUARD OUTSIDE THE DOOR.
UH...
WHOA.
I KNEW IT.
TODAY
THE ECONOMIST
WILD FRONTIER
BETTER HOMES + GARDENS
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FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA
OOOOO...
SHEILA! SHEILA! OH, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU, CHILD!
HI, MOM.
I'M GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT, HONEY.
OH MY! THE TWINS HAVE GROWN! I BET THAT YOUNG MAN IS BEATING THE GIRLS OFF WITH A STICK!
OH YEAH. AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.
FISK!
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NEED SOME HELP IN THE KITCHEN?
OH, THANK YOU, SHEILA.
THAT'S AN AWEFUL LOT OF GREENS, MOM.
WELL, I NEED ENOUGH FOR YOUR SISTER AND HER FAMILY.
BLINK
BOBBIE'S COMING OVER? DID SHE GET RE-MARRIED?
NOT REALLY...
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CAR COMIN'...
PERSIA! DARLING! DON'T GET OUT OF THE CAR WITHOUT YOUR SHOES ON!
YES, MOTHER!
NOT YOUR SANDALS! YOUR SHOES! YOUR FEET WILL GET FILTHY!
SORRY, MOTHER!
WHAT'S ON YOUR FACE? CHOCOLATE?
SCRUB SCRUB
DON'T EAT THAT STUFF. IT'LL MAKE YOU FAT!
LIFT YOUR TAIL OUT OF THE DIRT, CHILD! YOUR GRANDMOTHER WILL THINK I RAISED YOU IN A BARN!
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OH, BLESS ME! THOSE MUST BE SHEILA'S TWINS!
PERSIA! COME UP AND MEET YOUR COUSINS!
COMING, MOTHER!
YOU REALLY GREW TO BE A HANDSOME YOUNG MAN! I REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE NO BIGGER THAN A LOAF OF BANANA BREAD!
YOU REALLY DO LOOK SO MUCH LIKE YOUR DADDY!
I'LL BET YOUR GIRL BACK IN GEORGIA REALLY MISSES YOU!
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THESE ARE YOUR COUSINS, PERSIA.
THAT'S LUCY AND THAT'S FISK.
THIS IS MY DAUGHTER, PERSIA. SHE JUST GOT BACK FROM BECOMING "LITTLE MISS TENNESSEE".
SHE'S COME SUCH A LONG WAY FROM MISS TEEN NASHVILLE AND TEEN MISS MARILYN MONROE!
YA'LL KIDS KEEP EACH OTHER BUSY WHILE WE GO INSIDE AND MEET YOUR MOTHER.
UM... HI.
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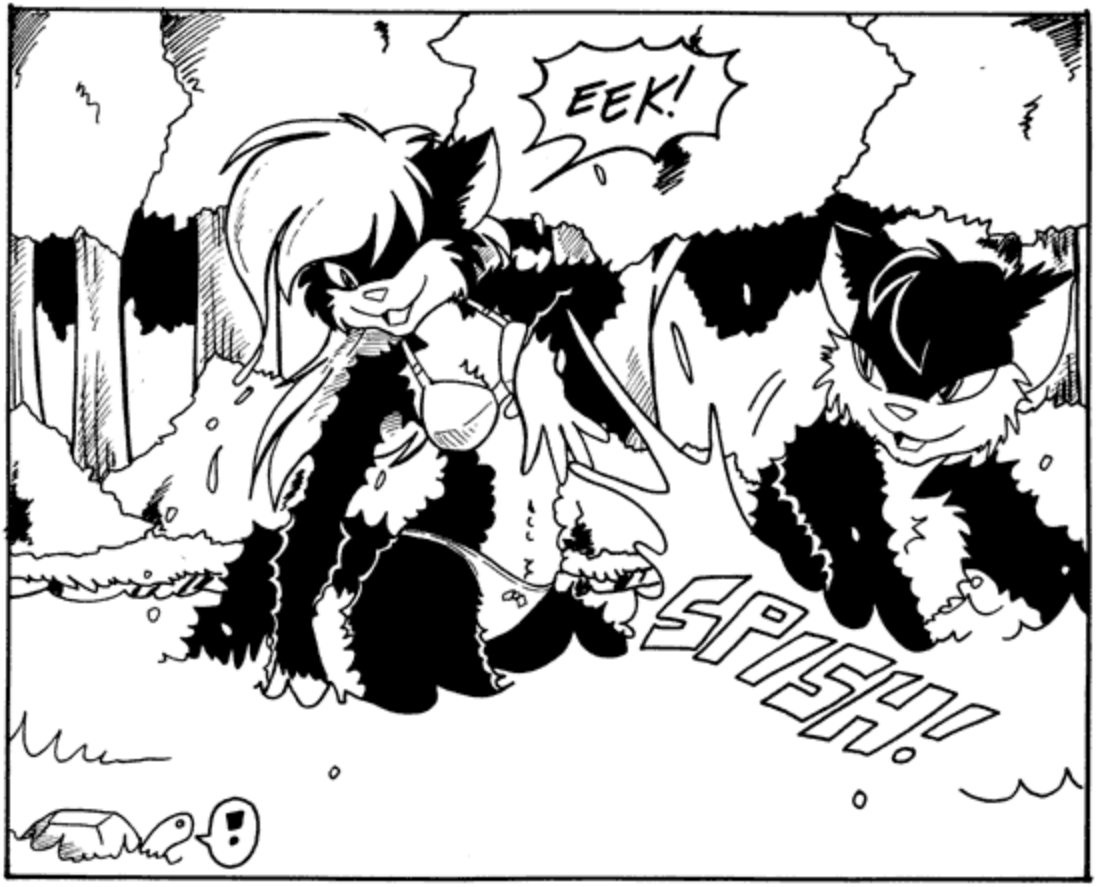

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YOUR GIRLS ARE HERE TO SEE YOU, HONEY. THEY BROUGHT YOUR GRANDCHILDREN.
HEH. WHAT HAVE I UNLEASHED ON THE WORLD?
YOU GO THROUGH LIFE...
AND IN THE END... YOU WONDER IF YOU DID RIGHT.
THEN YOU SEE THESE... BEAUTIFUL FACES.
AND YOU KNOW YOU CAN SAY...
... YOUR LIFE WAS WORTH IT. YOU CAN BE CONTENT.
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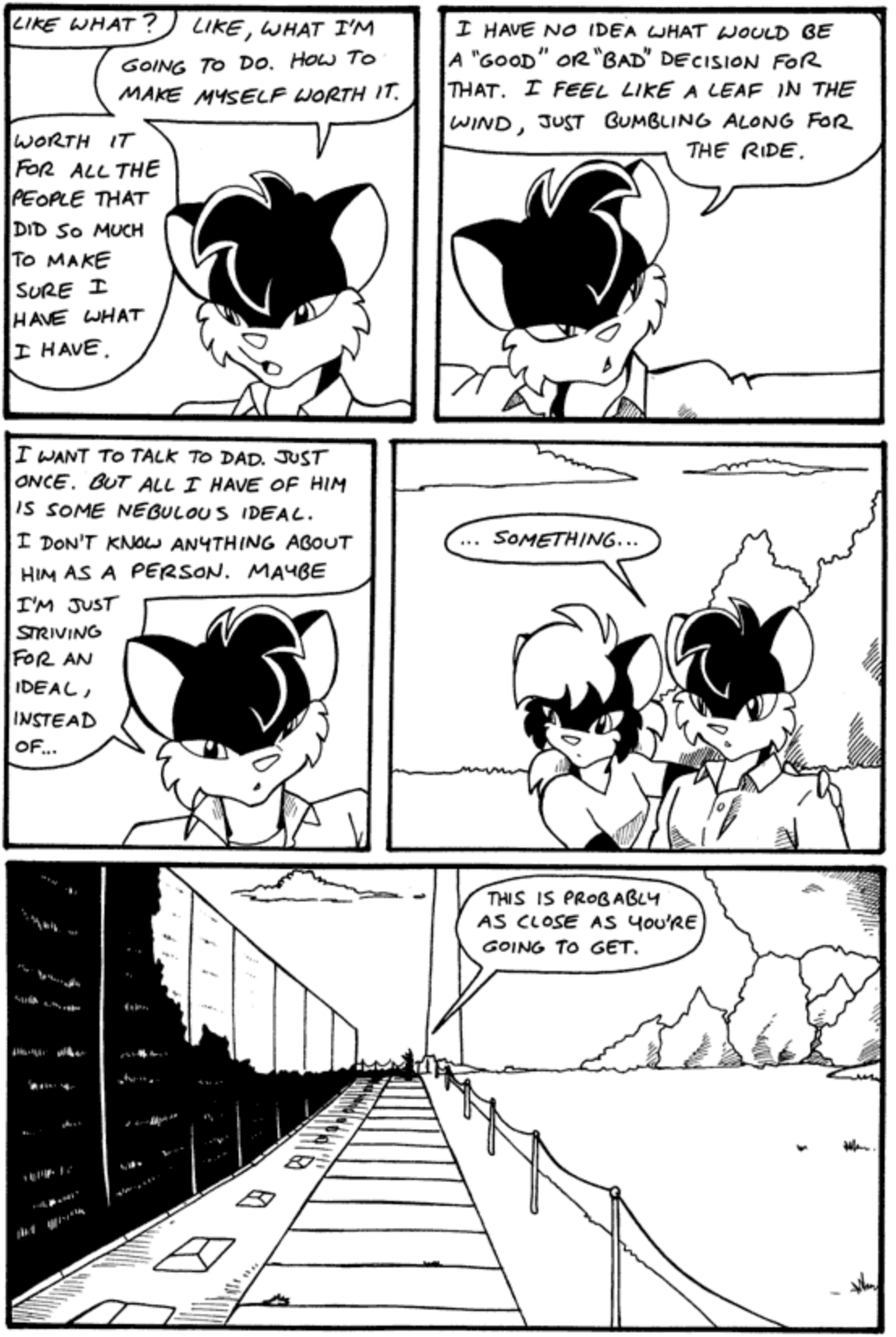

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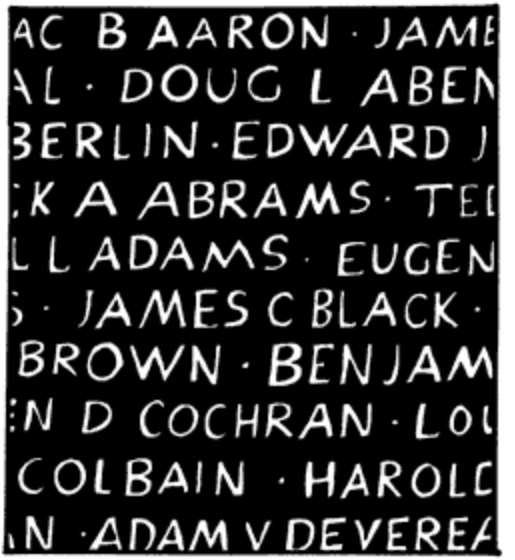

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WELCOME BACK! YOU MISSED A GREAT TIME IN FLORIDA!
DON'T REMIND ME!
LOOK! I GOT INTO EMORY!
KICK ASS!
WHAT ARE YOU AND FISK DOING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?
WITH MY GRADES? PROBABLY UGA. I THINK FISK'S UNDECIDED...
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HE JUST NEEDS TO FIND HIS CALLING. LIKE... MALE STRIPPER...
...ANCHORMAN...
...POOL BOY...
...LION TAMER...
ACTUALLY, I WAS THINKING OF GOING INTO THE ARMY FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
THE ARMY?
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FISK!? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I THOUGHT YOU WERE AT BENNING?
FISK! OH GOD... ... WE HAVE TO BE QUIET!...
FIFTY-NINE DEGREES IN THE HEART OF UGA, PARTIALLY CLOUDY...
...WITH A [illegible]RTY [illegible]ENT CHANCE OF RA[illegible] [illegible]RISE AND SHINE
POOF
[illegible]ATHENS..
...SO WAKE UP—
SLAP!
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MMP...
BRUSH BRUSH
BRUSH
GRAB!
...IS JOURNALISM THE MERE DELIVERY OF "WHAT HAPPENED" OR AN ESSENTIAL SOCIAL FORCE...
SIP
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I'M SERIOUS! YOU'LL FIND A GREAT GUY SOME DAY!
OH, HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT...
BECAUSE YOU'RE CUTE LOOKING AND A NICE PERSON. AND I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMEONE FOR EVERYONE!
OH C'MON! THAT'S JUST PAP! SOMETHING EASY TO SAY BUT WITH NO BASIS OR EVIDENCE!
HOW CAN YOU HONESTLY THROW OUT A GUARANTEE SO FREELY LIKE THAT!?
DOGMA
BELIEF
REASON
LOGIC
BECAUSE I... I BELIEVE IT VERY STRONGLY.
I SEE...
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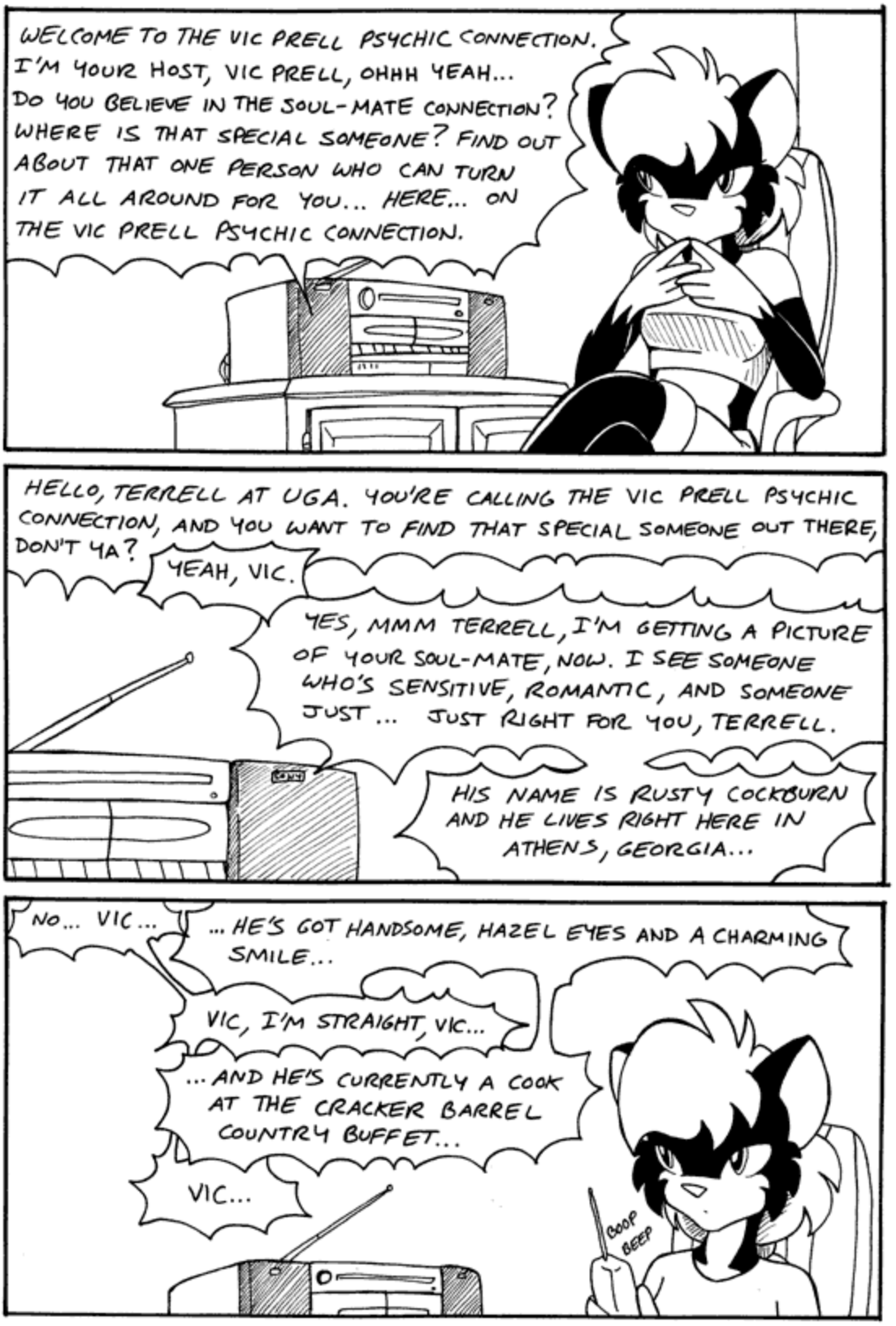

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YOU'RE NOT GOING OUT ON FRIDAY LIKE EVERYONE ELSE?
NAH. I'M GETTING KINDA SICK OF PARTIES AND BOYS.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, BETH? YOU RARELY GO OUT, AND NEVER DATE.
WELL, I HATE ALMOST ALL PEOPLE...
OH, C'MON.
IT'S TRUE! IT'S A LONG STORY.
I HAVE ALL NIGHT.
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I GOT MY FIRST BOYFRIEND WHEN I WAS A JUNIOR.
JASON WAS A GREAT BOY. WE WENT TOGETHER SO WELL, LIKE WE WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER.
ALL MY SKEPTICISMS ABOUT LOVE MELTED WHEN I FINALLY HAD SOME OF MY OWN.
I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS SICK WHEN I FELL IN LOVE.
HE HAD AN AGGRESSIVE FORM OF LYMPHOMA THAT EVENTUALLY TOOK HIS LIFE.
THE MOST FULFILLING AND WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE I'VE EVER HAD ONLY LASTED THREE MONTHS.
HOLY CRAP!
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DON'T YOU EVER MISS JUST BEING WITH A GUY, THOUGH? HOW DO YOU TOLERATE LONELINESS?
YOU GET USED TO IT.
I DON'T THINK I COULD.
WHY DO YOU NEED A GUY, LUCY?
LOOK, I'VE GOT A WHOLE BOX FULL OF PENISES THAT'LL NEVER LIE TO YOU OR FUCK YOUR BEST FRIEND!
RADIO SH
I GOT CAT ONES, OTTER ONES, DOG ONES, HYENA ONES, AND OHH... MY FAVORITE...
RUMMAGE
SNACK
CTHULU!
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LOOK, THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT GETTING OFF. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT REAL COMPANIONSHIP. I'M IN LOVE WITH A GUY I CAN NEVER HAVE FOR LIFE. I WANT TO FIND SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN SOMEONE I CAN.
NOT... THIS.
YOU CAN'T HUG THIS STUFF. THESE THINGS CAN'T TELL YOU THEY LOVE YOU, AND PURR WHEN YOU RUB THEIR SHOULDERS. THEY CAN'T KISS YOU GOODNIGHT.
THIS ONE CAN.
EEEEYAH!!
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HEY, AMY. YOU GOT ANOTHER LETTER.
THANKS! JUST PUT IT ON THE DRESSER.
NINETEEN
WHO'S "THE INKFOX"?
A SECRET ADMIRER!
HE WRITES EVERY WEEK! I GOTTA FIND OUT WHO HE IS!!
ROLL
ROLL
EEEEEEEEE!!
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WHAT ABOUT ANDRE ?
ANDRE CAN GO TO HELL. DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE DID ?
WHAT?
PSSSH!
HE PUT HIS HAND BETWEEN MY LEGS WHEN WE WERE MAKING OUT.
OHH...
HE WENT TO CHURCH WITH ME ALL THAT TIME JUST TO TRY TO HAVE SEX!
HE FAKED HIS FEELINGS!
YOU'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT A GUY, LUCY. YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU CAN TRUST.
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HA! THAT'S BETTER!
YOU LOOK LIKE A HOT TEACHER OR SOMETHING!
ISN'T THIS YOUR BOYFRIEND'S JACKET?
YEAH, BUT DON'T WORRY. HE WON'T BE AT THIS PARTY!
HE'S NOT? YOU'RE GOING WITHOUT HIM?
HEY, I LOVE TOMMY. SOMEDAY, I'LL MARRY HIM AND GIVE HIM LOTS OF LITTLE BUNNIES. BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN I'LL STOP HAVING FUN!
I SEE...
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LUCY!
YOU BACKSTABBING CUNT!
WHOA! HEY!
BACK OFF JESSICA! SHE GAVE TOMMY HEAD LAST NIGHT!
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
HE FELT SO GUILTY ABOUT IT THAT HE CONFESSED!
WELL, YOU'VE BEEN CHEATING ON HIM FOR YEARS...
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
WHAT IS, THEN?
STRETCH
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HOW COULD YOU DO THAT!?
WELL, IT WAS A LOT LIKE WHISTLING, EXCEPT YOU DON'T PUSH AIR OUT...
THIS IS NOT A JOKE! HE'S A VIRGIN! HE'S NEVER HAD ANYTHING LIKE THAT AND HE FIRST GETS IT FROM YOU!?
YEAH, HE DID SEEM TO BE REALLY PENT UP...
YOU BETTER WIPE THAT SMUG SMILE OFF YOUR FACE...
HEY YOU SET YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO A GAUDY STANDARD! ALL I DID WAS TREAT IT BY THOSE STANDARDS!
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LUCY! YOU HAVE A PHONE CALL! IT'S SOME GUY.
PFF. LAST THING I NEED IS TO TALK TO "SOME GUY".
I'M SORRY, SHE CAN'T COME TO THE PHONE. CAN I TAKE A MESSAGE?
FISK? OKAY...
!
OKAY, I'LL TELL HER YOU CA-YEEEE
GIMME!
I GOT IT.!!
BONK
HELLOOOOOOOO
HHHRRK!
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VRRMMMM...
SLAM
HEY.
HELLO...
DING
DONG
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HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HEY! GOT ROOM FOR COMPANY?
SURE.
HUFF
PANT
I THINK YOUR SISTER IS GOING TO ASK OUT RACHEL'S BOYFRIEND.
HHH
HFF
WELL, TOMMY'S A NICE GUY... BUT...
I SHOULD WARN YOU ABOUT RACHEL.
THAT'S WHO SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT...
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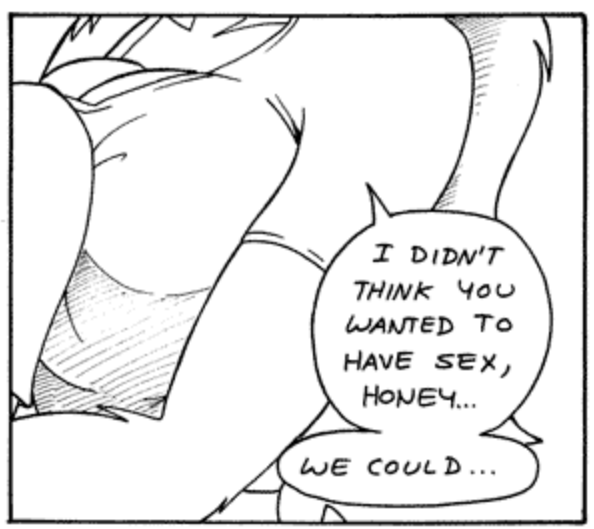

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THIS ISN'T ABOUT YOUR LOVE. IT'S ABOUT MINE.
IT IS CONDITIONAL. IF IT WASN'T IT WOULDN'T MATTER WHO YOU WERE. IT WOULDN'T BE EARNED. IT WOULD JUST BE "HAD"!
HOW CAN TRUE LOVE BE CONDITIONAL!?
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO LOVE THE PERSON FOR WHO THEY ARE INSIDE!
I'M SUPPOSED TO LOVE SOME IMAGINARY, INVISIBLE VERSION OF YOU, THAT ISN'T A LYING, CHEATING SLUT!? GOODBYE!
YOU'LL NEVER GET ANOTHER GIRL LIKE ME, TOMMY.
I HOPE NOT!
TOMMY, WAIT! I'M NOT DONE TALKING ABOUT THIS! TOMMY!? THOSE OTHER GUYS DON'T LOVE ME!
HEY! WE LOVE YOU, BABY!
HA HA! YEAH!
SHUT UP.
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HEY LUCY.
TOMMY! HAVE A SEAT.
THANKS. I FINALLY WENT THROUGH WITH IT.
OH?
I BROKE IT OFF WITH RACHEL. I'M STILL NOT SURE HOW I FEEL. I'M SURPRISED SHE CARED ENOUGH THAT SHE BEGGED ME NOT TO GO.
I'M SORRY.
SHE'S GOT ATHLETES AND MUSCLEHEADS WHO STARE AT HER TITS... WHY DOES SHE WANT TO KEEP HER CLAWS IN ME?
BECAUSE YOU'RE STABLE. I GUESS THERE'S ALSO AN INSTINCTIVE REACTION TO BEING REJECTED...
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MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT. MAYBE IF I'D AGREED TO HAVE SEX AND LIFT WEIGHTS...
IT'S STILL ABOUT HER CHARACTER.
SHE'D HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO FIND ANOTHER BOYFRIEND, BUT NOT TO LIE.
BESIDES, I DOUBT I'D BE ALL THAT GOOD AT IT, THE FIRST TIME.
YOU SHOULD GET IN PRACTICE BEFORE YOUR HONEYMOON.
I'M NERVOUS.
COME HOME WITH ME. I'LL TEACH YOU WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.
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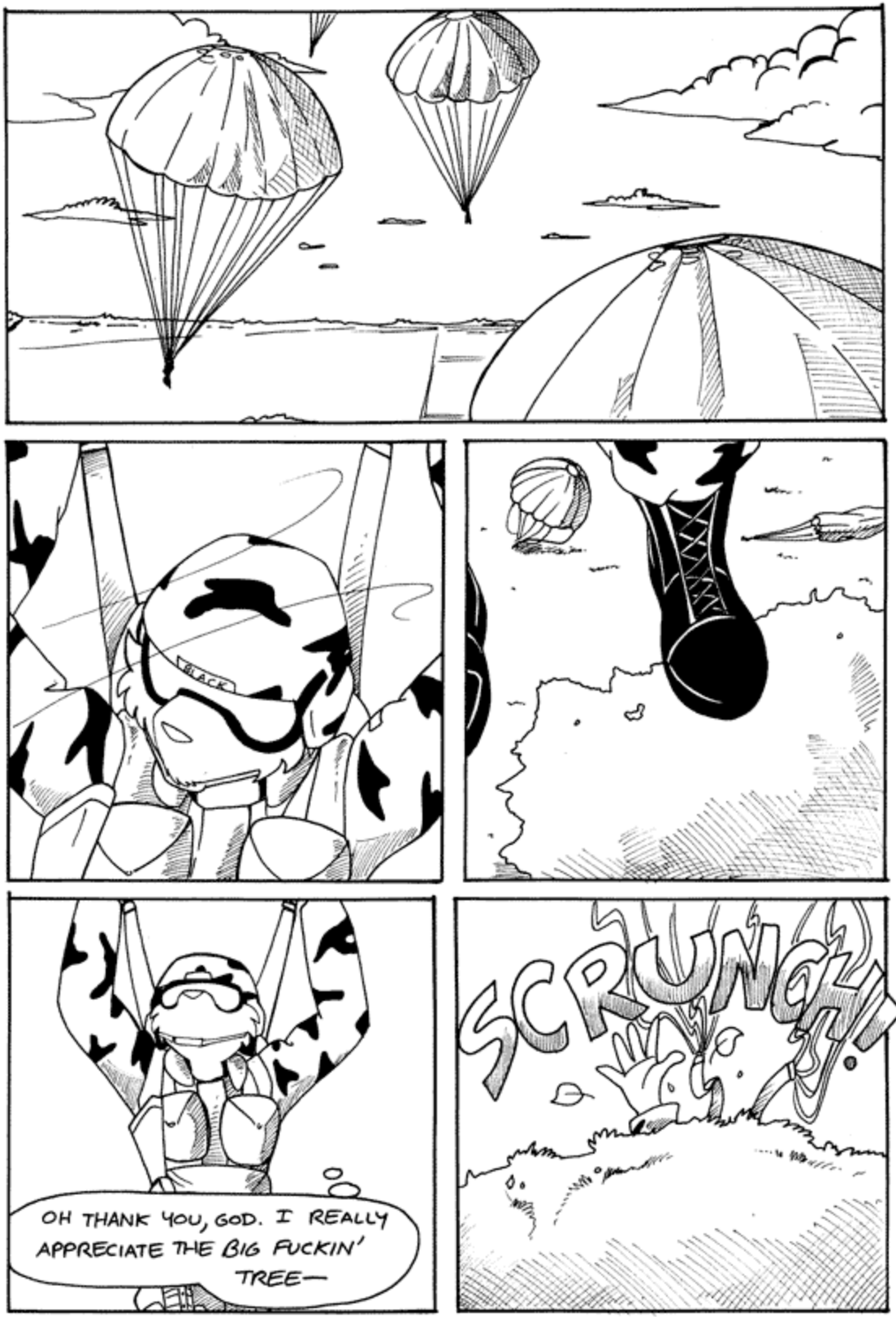
BLACK
OH THANK YOU, GOD. I REALLY APPRECIATE THE BIG FUCKIN' TREE—
SCRUNCH!
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A TREE, YOU SAY?
IT SNUCK RIGHT UP ON ME, SIR.
MMM.
SIT TIGHT. I'LL GET A NURSE TO STITCH IT UP.
JENKINS, THERE'S A SOLDIER WHO NEEDS SIMPLE STITCHES WHEN YOU'RE DONE.
YES SIR.
I'M ALMOST FINISHED.
MMM.!
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IT TOOK A LOT OF DEPROGRAMMING. WE HAD TO DECONSTRUCT EVERYTHING MY FATHER PUT IN PLACE AND BUILD EVERYTHING BACK UP CORRECTLY, SO I COULD FUNCTION IN THE WORLD. I HAD TO LEARN:

1.) AFFECTION DOESN'T NEED TO BE EXPRESSED WITH SEX.
2.) PARENTS LOVE THEIR CHILDREN BY TEACHING THEM ABOUT THE WORLD AND PREPARING THEM TO SUCCEED, NOT WITH SEX.
3.) YOUR SELF ESTEEM SHOULDN'T BE BASED ON YOUR SEXUAL DEPENDENCIES ON OTHERS.

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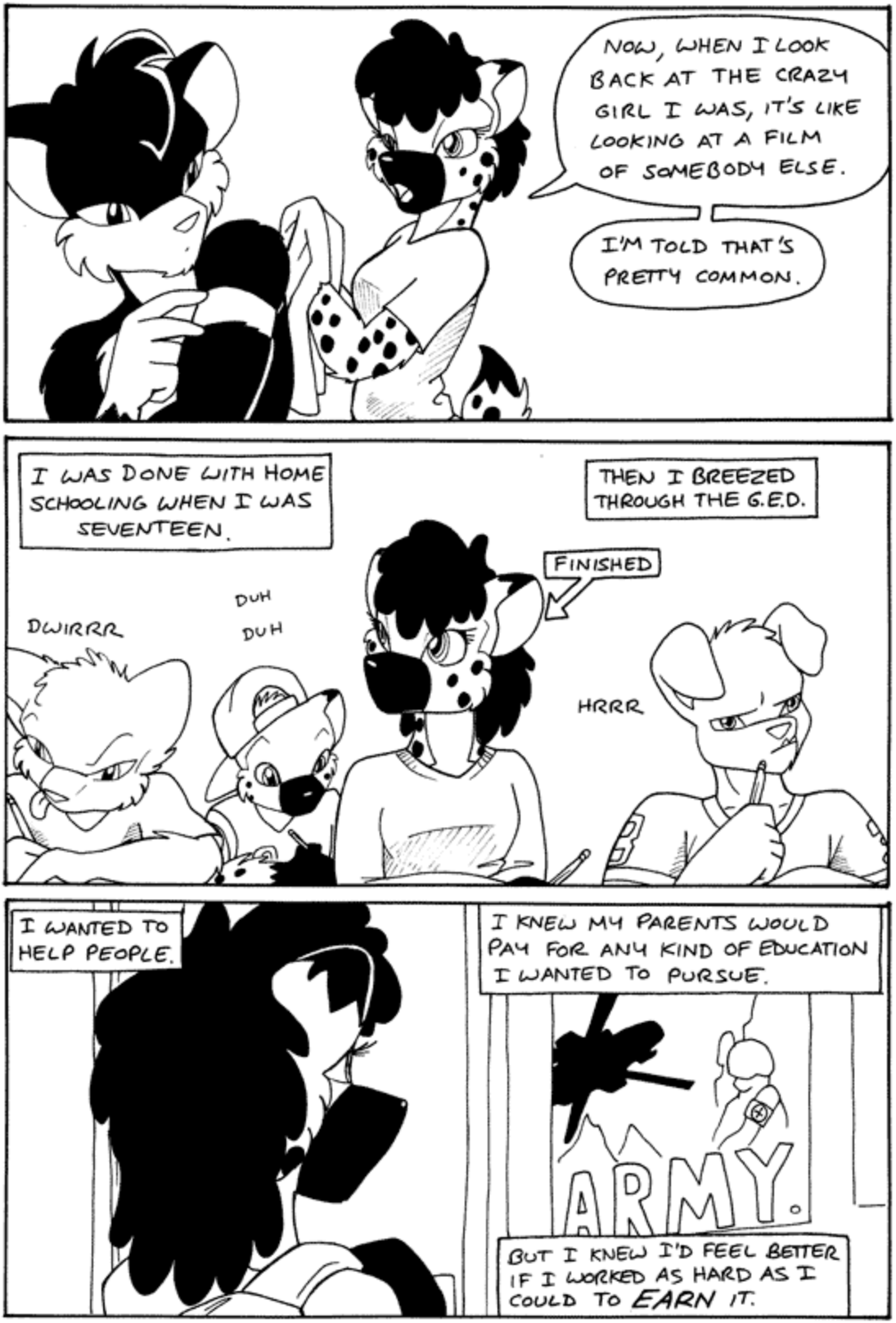

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ALL DONE?
YEAH.
GOOD ADVICE?
NOT REALLY...
I THINK I'M OUTGROWING THE CHURCH.
THIS WILL BE MY FIRST SUMMER WITHOUT THAT PSYCHOLOGICAL CRUTCH.
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So, what are you going to do over the summer?
I got a job at an adult novelty shop. Might as well earn some dough.
Hah! Guess what I'll be doing this summer!
Besides keeping your roomates awake with your new boyfriend?
Do you really want us to guess?
Tsk! I'm competing with other interns for a broadcast job at CNN radio!
Nice going! I can imagine your voice on the radio.
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WELCOME HOME, LUCY.
HI, MOM.
HOW'S SCHOOL?
DIFFICULT, BUT I LIKE IT.
HOW ARE YOU AND SAM?
I WAITED UNTIL YOU GOT HOME TO TELL YOU..
LAST WEEK, HE PROPOSED.
HOLY COW!
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IS THERE A DATE, YET?
NOT YET. I'M HOPING TO FIND OUT WHEN YOUR BROTHER CAN MAKE IT.
SAM'S GOT HIS OWN BUSINESS, NOW. WHEN FISK'S SERVICE IS UP, HE'LL GIVE HIM A JOB.
IT'LL BE SAFER.
ANYWAY, I LEFT YOUR ROOM JUST AS YOU DID.
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SO, HOW IS EVERYTHING AT THE PORN STORE?
WELL, THE UP-SIDE IS I CAN WEAR ANYTHING I WANT.
I HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE SHAMED.
IT'S FOR MY MOTHER-IN-LAW.
GOATBOY
THE SHAMELESS...
IF THIS WERE ANY BIGGER IT'D BE A TRAFFIC CONE!
BEEP BEEP
SPHINCTER SOVEREIGN
...AND THOSE WHO ARE WILLING VECTORS FOR IT.
EXCUSE MEEEE...
DO YOU HAVE THIS ONE IN "TRANSLUCENT"?
MIGHTY JOE-JACK
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SHE'S GOOD.
SEE IF SHE MAINTAINS HER COMPOSURE WITH THE "PISS TEST".
HEH.
ALSO IN THE NEWS...
UNZIP
PRESIDENT BUSH MET WITH PREMIER GORBACHEV, TODAY...
PEE NOISES
... AND THAT'S YOUR NEWS. LUCY BLACK, CNN RADIO.
WHAT!? YOU DID WELL!
SWAT
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BUT YOU'VE LEFT OUT THE MENTION OF HIS CREDIBILITY! IT'S ALMOST LIKE LYING ABOUT A STORY!
IT'S NOT A "LIE", LUCY. IT'S JUST AN "OMISSION". WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO MENTION EVERYTHING, AND WE HAVE TO KEEP THE STORY INTERESTING.
IT'S SIMPLE, LUCY: WHATEVER WE THINK OF THE NEWS, THE LISTENERS WANT TO BE INFORMED AND ENTERTAINED. THAT MEANS REAL LIFE IS COMPETING WITH MUSIC, BOOKS, AND MOVIES.
COPS KILLING KIDS ISN'T AS COMPETATIVE UNLESS THE COP IS POSSIBLY WRONG.
WHAT ABOUT THE POOR COP!?
IT'S ONE MAN, LUCY! WE'VE GOT A WHOLE COMPANY TO THINK ABOUT!
START TAKING YOUR CAREER A LITTLE MORE SERIOUSLY.
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TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, I FOUND OUT SHE WAS BEING CONSIDERED FOR HIRE OVER ME.
YOU'RE BOTH VERY GOOD. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF SKILL I'D SAY YOU WERE EQUAL.
BUT?
D'ANNA HAS, WHAT WE CALL, A MORE "COSMOPOLITAN" VOICE. THERE IS A GENERAL BIAS AGAINST THE SOUTHERN ACCENT IN NATIONAL BROADCASTING.
I'D LIKE TO STEER YOU TOWARD WSB, OUR LOCAL AFFILIATE. THEY'RE FAR MORE OPEN TO THE "LOCAL FLAVOR".
THAT'S PRETTY STRANGE. YOUR ACCENT ISN'T THAT STRONG.
WELL, I GUESS THERE'S "JUST ENOUGH" TO FORM A BIAS.
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SO, WHAT WILL YOU DO?
I SUPPOSE WORKING FOR A LOCAL STATION WOULDN'T BE SO BAD.
WELL, I'D HATE TO SEE YOU GIVE UP SO EASILY.
WELL, I COULD TRY TO MITIGATE MY ACCENT, BUT...
HEH, NO. THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
I MEAN, YOU'RE ACCEPTING THEIR TERMS.
IF THEY'RE GOING TO MAKE A DECISION, THEY SHOULD MAKE IT WITH THEIR EYES WIDE OPEN. THEY SHOULD KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT THIS OTHER WOMAN AS POSSIBLE.
YOU'RE GOING TO BE A JOURNALIST, RIGHT?
CONSIDER IT "PRACTICE".
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SHE CAME TO YOUR HOUSE?
I THINK MY MOTHER LET HER IN. MY HOUSE ISN'T SAFE UNTIL THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP.
YOU'RE TAKING IT VERY WELL. I CAN'T IMAGINE BEING THAT ANGRY WITH MY MOTHER.
WELL, I CAN'T SAY THERE WASN'T JUST A LITTLE SATISFACTION IN TELLING HER TO GO TO HELL.
HEH. I'M GLAD YOU CAME OVER. I NEEDED A BREAK FROM MY RESEARCH.
HOW'S THAT GOING, ANYHOW?
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SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
I'VE GOT IT ALL ORGANIZED AND REFERENCED. I'M GOING TO DROP IT ON THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S DESK FIRST THING MONDAY.
IT MIGHT NOT GET ME A JOB BUT IT WILL BE SATISFYING.
SCRITCHLE
WHAT ABOUT YOU? ARE YOU GOING HOME, TONIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T WANT TO.
I CAN TELL...
HOW'S THAT?
BECAUSE YOUR BONER IS POKING ME IN THE BACK.
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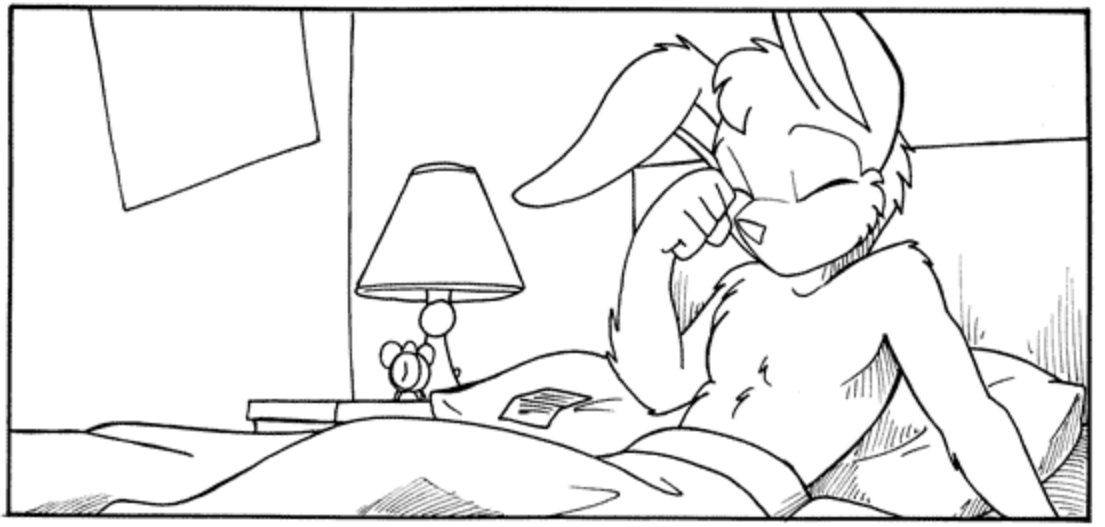

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YOU ALMOST ACT EMBARASSED ABOUT WHAT YOU WERE ABLE TO DO!
HEH. IT'S NOT QUITE THAT.
I MEAN, IS THIS SOMETHING YOU WANT TO BE GOOD AT?
I MEAN... THIS IS JUST TRAINING.
MY MOTHER WORRIES LIKE HELL. MY FATHER DIED IN A WAR. GRANDMOTHER TOLD HER HOW DIFFERENT HER HUSBAND WAS WHEN HE GOT BACK FROM KOREA. AND IT WASN'T IN A GOOD WAY.
SHE'LL BE A MESS IF I GO TO WAR. WORSE IF I'M "GOOD" AT IT.
THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, YOU'LL PROBABLY ONLY BE GOOD AT TRAINING.
CNN
BREAKING NEWS
WHAT?
WHAT'D I SAY?
WHAT ARE YA'LL STARING AT?
CNN
BREAKING NEWS
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1918
1944
1953
1968
1990
OH MAN...
WHAT'S A GUY GOT TO DO FOR A HAPPY ENDING AROUND HERE?
THERE'S AN AIR FORCE BASE OVER YONDER.
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I STILL WORRY. I COULD BARELY SLEEP, LAST NIGHT.
I'M SURE FISK WILL BE FINE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION
CYNTHIA TUCKER: WHORE
DESERT
IT'S NOT THE SAME ARMY. IT'S A VOLUNTEER FORCE, ALL TRAINED UP AND PROFESSIONAL.
AND HE'S SMART ON TOP OF THAT.
IT'S NOT JUST THAT. IT'S WHAT HE MAY HAVE TO DO... OR SEE...
ATLANTA CON
HELLO THAR!
'SUP?
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MORNIN', BLACK.
MM.
SADDAM MOVED INTO SAUDI ARABIA LAST NIGHT, ALONG THE COAST.
NO SHIT?
MARINES HAD THEIR RADIOS JAMMED UP BY KAFFJI. LOOKS ISOLATED, THOUGH.
THAT'S ENCOURAGING.
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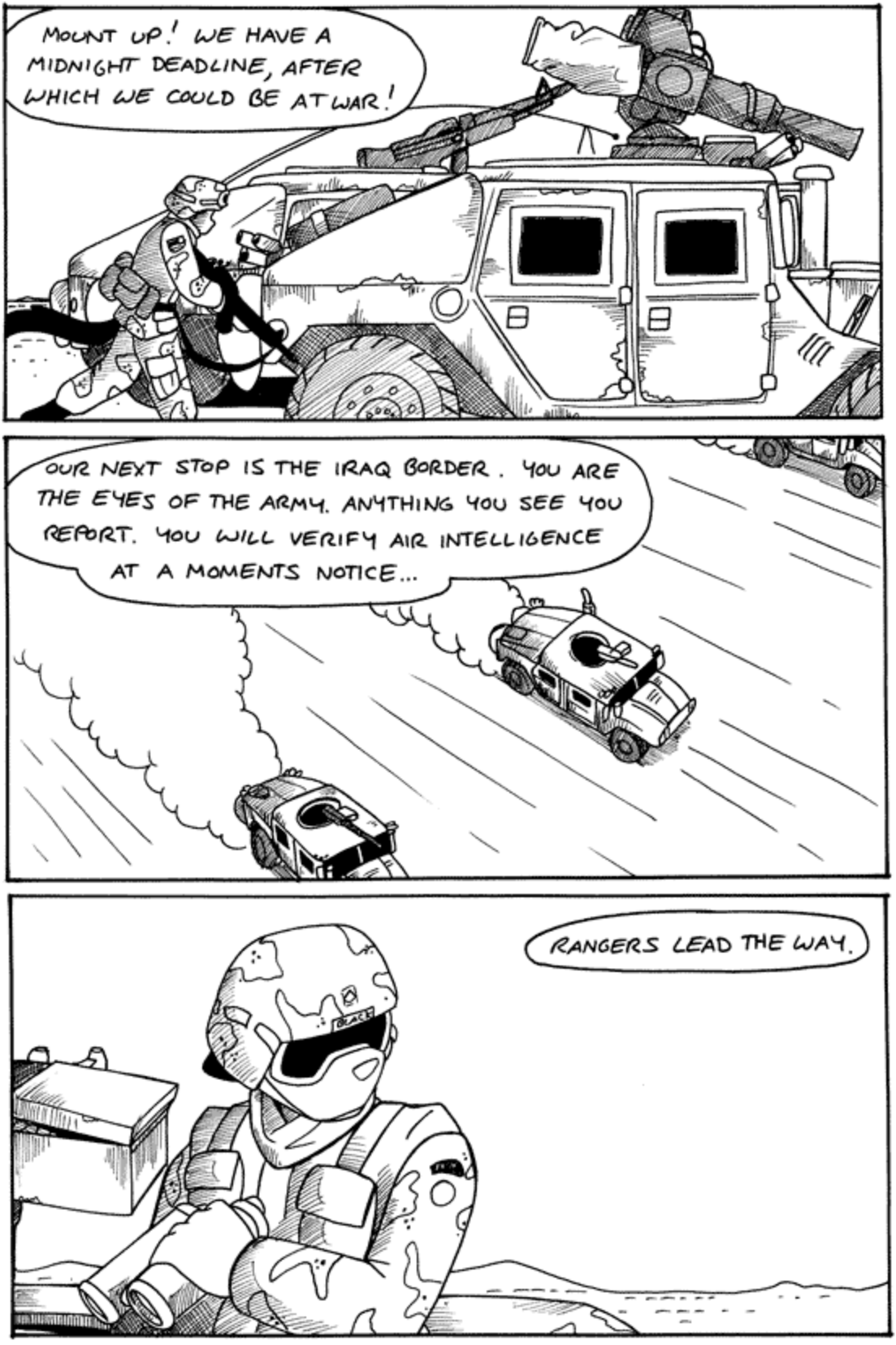
MOUNT UP! WE HAVE A MIDNIGHT DEADLINE, AFTER WHICH WE COULD BE AT WAR!
OUR NEXT STOP IS THE IRAQ BORDER. YOU ARE THE EYES OF THE ARMY. ANYTHING YOU SEE YOU REPORT. YOU WILL VERIFY AIR INTELLIGENCE AT A MOMENTS NOTICE...
RANGERS LEAD THE WAY.
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GOOD MORNING, BLACK.
WHAT'S THE MAIN FEATURE?
ANY OF THEM COMING AT US?
MORNING, SERGEANT.
DUG-IN GUARD UNIT JUST OVER THE BORDER. AIR FORCE IS EATING THEM UP.
NOPE.
WOULD YOU WANT TO?
SHIT...
BOOM!
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TORES! WAKE UP BLACK AND GET HIM ON THAT FIFTY.
GET UP, KILLER!
BLACK
WE'RE GOING AHEAD OF 4TH I.D. BUT THERE'S A DOWN MEDIVAC AND WE'RE BEING DIVERTED.
GET ON THE FIFTY.
BLACK
...GUARD THE CRASH SITE UNTIL THE MAIN COLUMN REACHES YOU...
AIR ELEMENTS ARE IN THE AREA. OVER.
ROGER.
THERE ARE TO BE NO TROPHIES IN BAGHDAD, CAPTAIN.
YES, SIR.
WHITE
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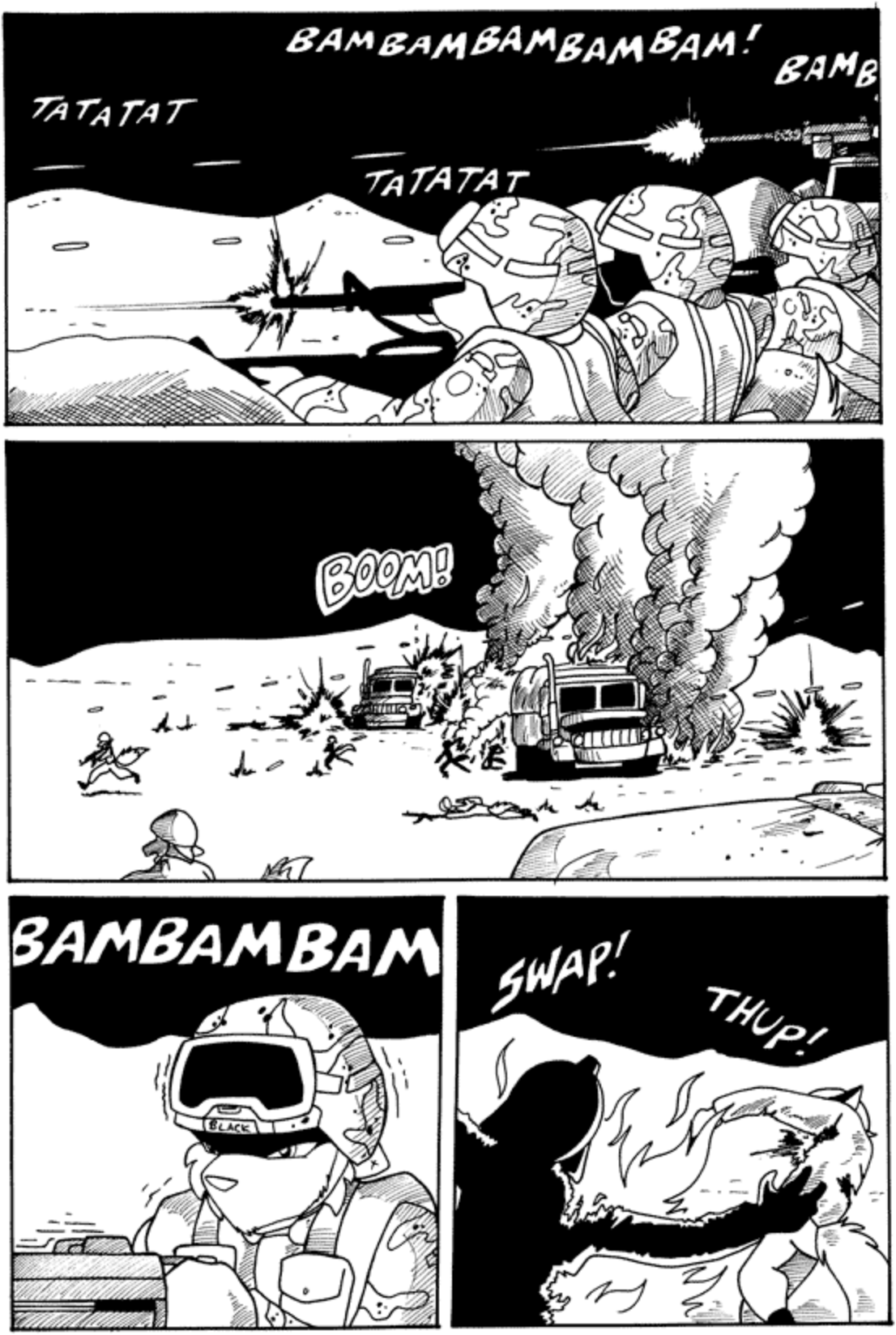
BAMBAMBAMBAMBAM!
BAMB
TATATAT
TATATAT
BOOM!
BAMBAMBAM
BLACK
SWAP!
THUP!
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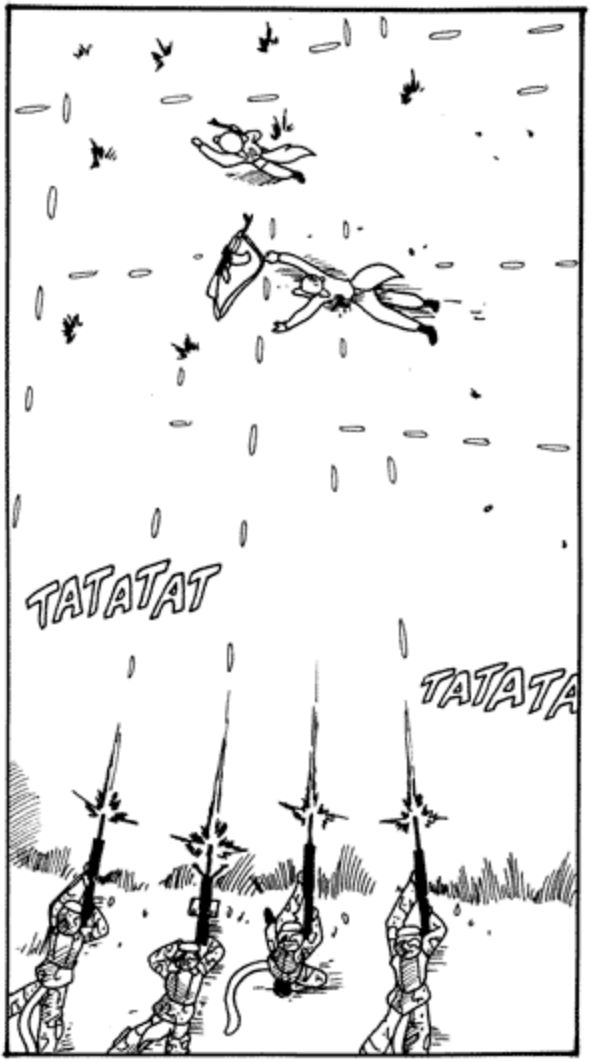

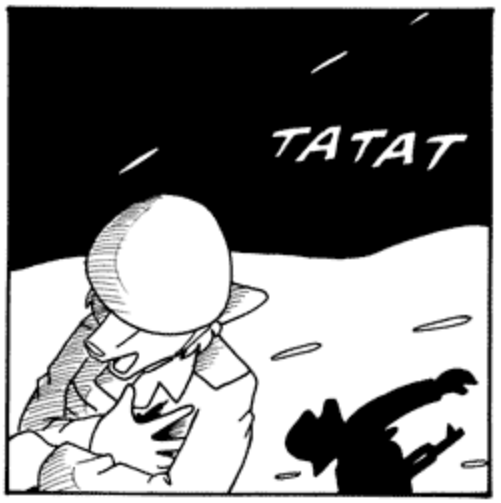

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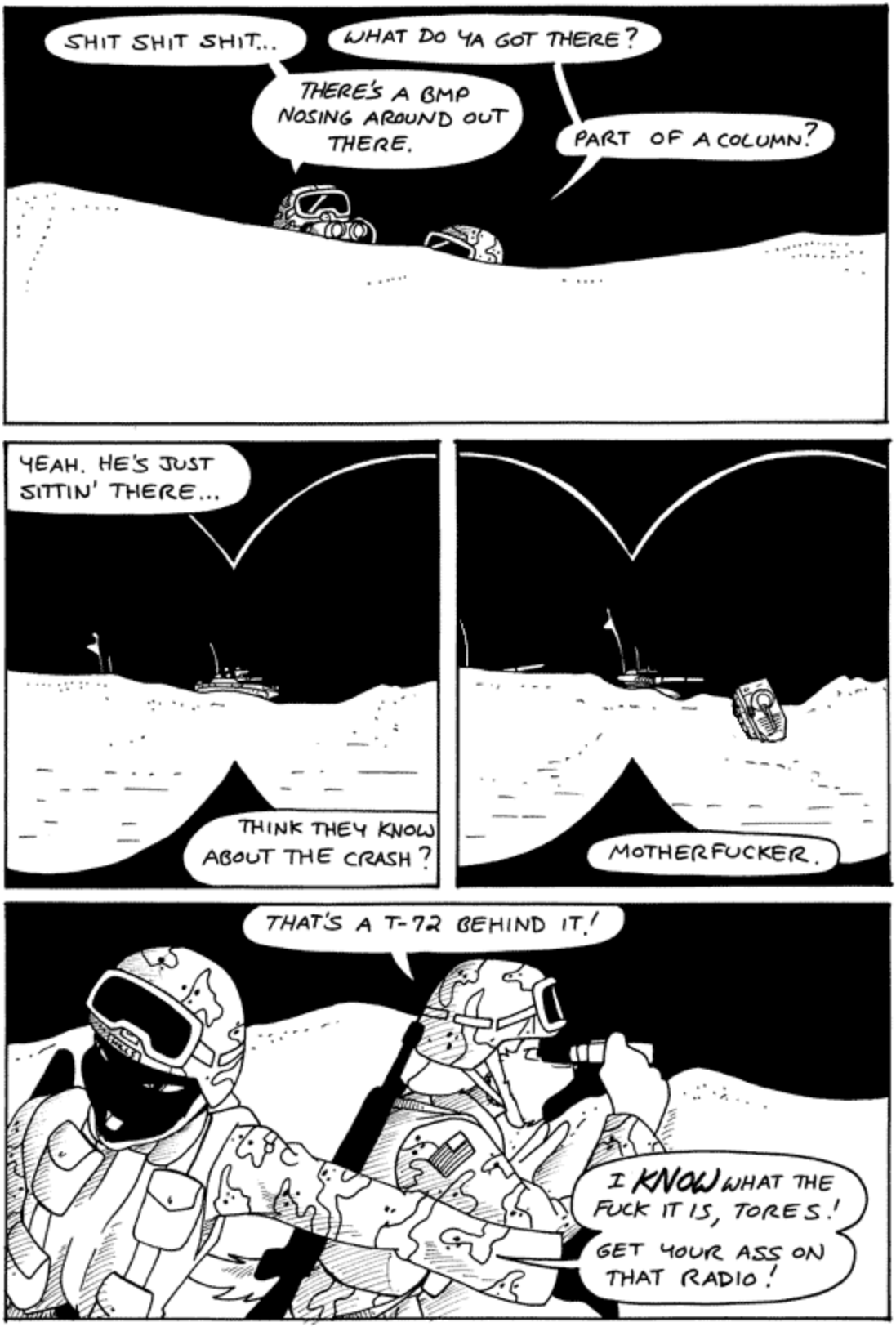

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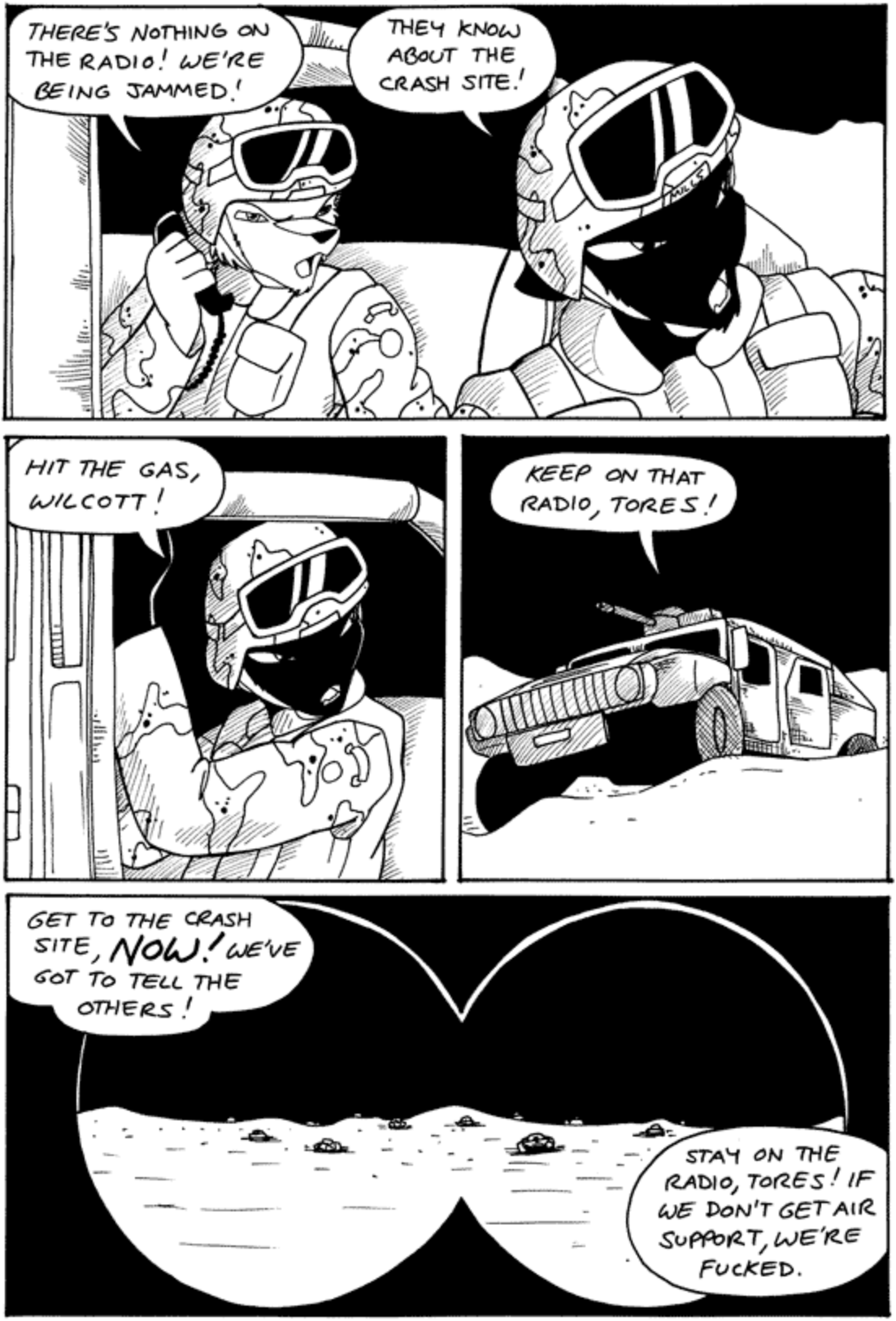
THERE'S NOTHING ON THE RADIO! WE'RE BEING JAMMED!
THEY KNOW ABOUT THE CRASH SITE!
HIT THE GAS, WILCOTT!
KEEP ON THAT RADIO, TORES!
GET TO THE CRASH SITE, NOW! WE'VE GOT TO TELL THE OTHERS!
STAY ON THE RADIO, TORES! IF WE DON'T GET AIR SUPPORT, WE'RE FUCKED.
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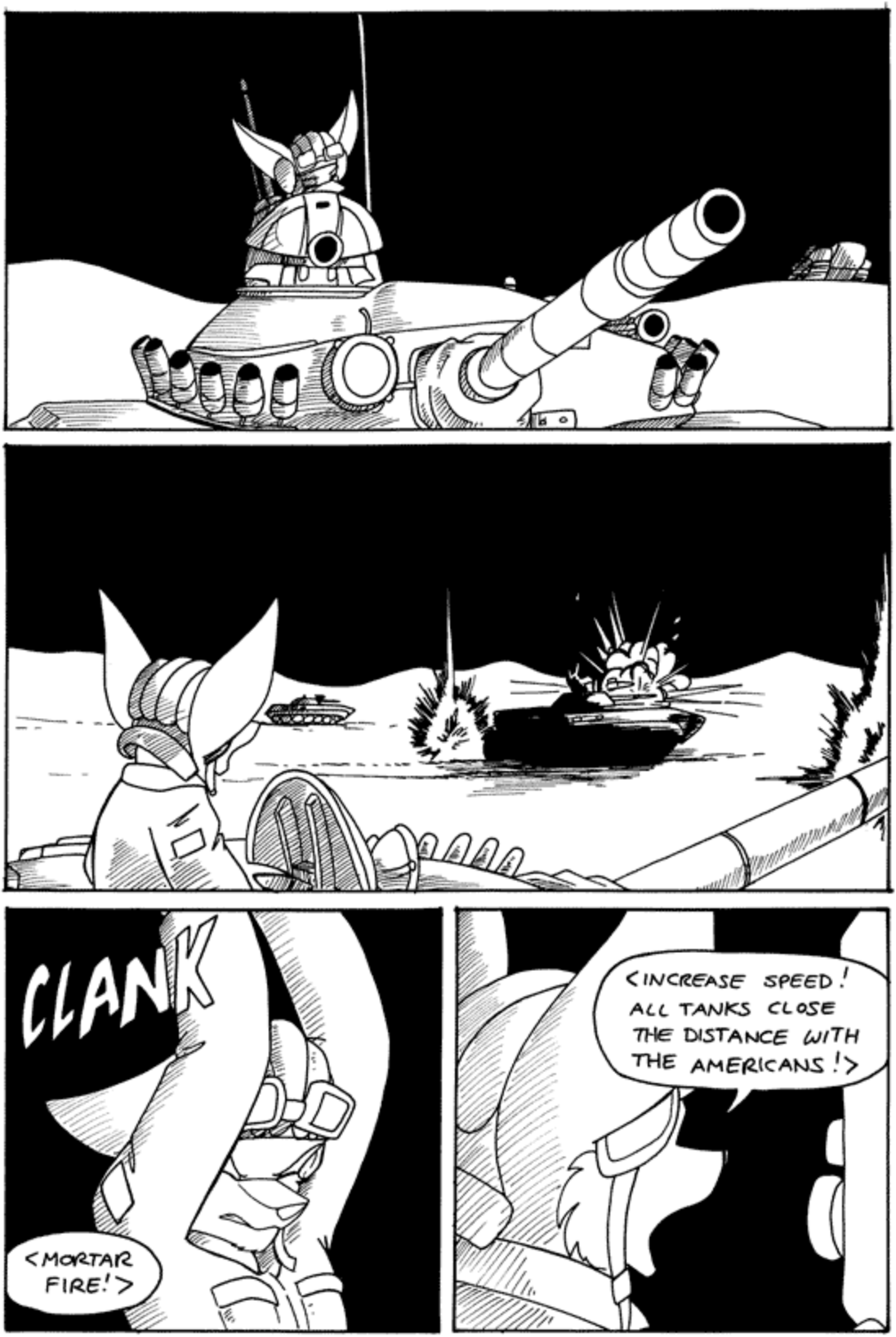
CLANK
<MORTAR FIRE!>
<INCREASE SPEED! ALL TANKS CLOSE THE DISTANCE WITH THE AMERICANS!>
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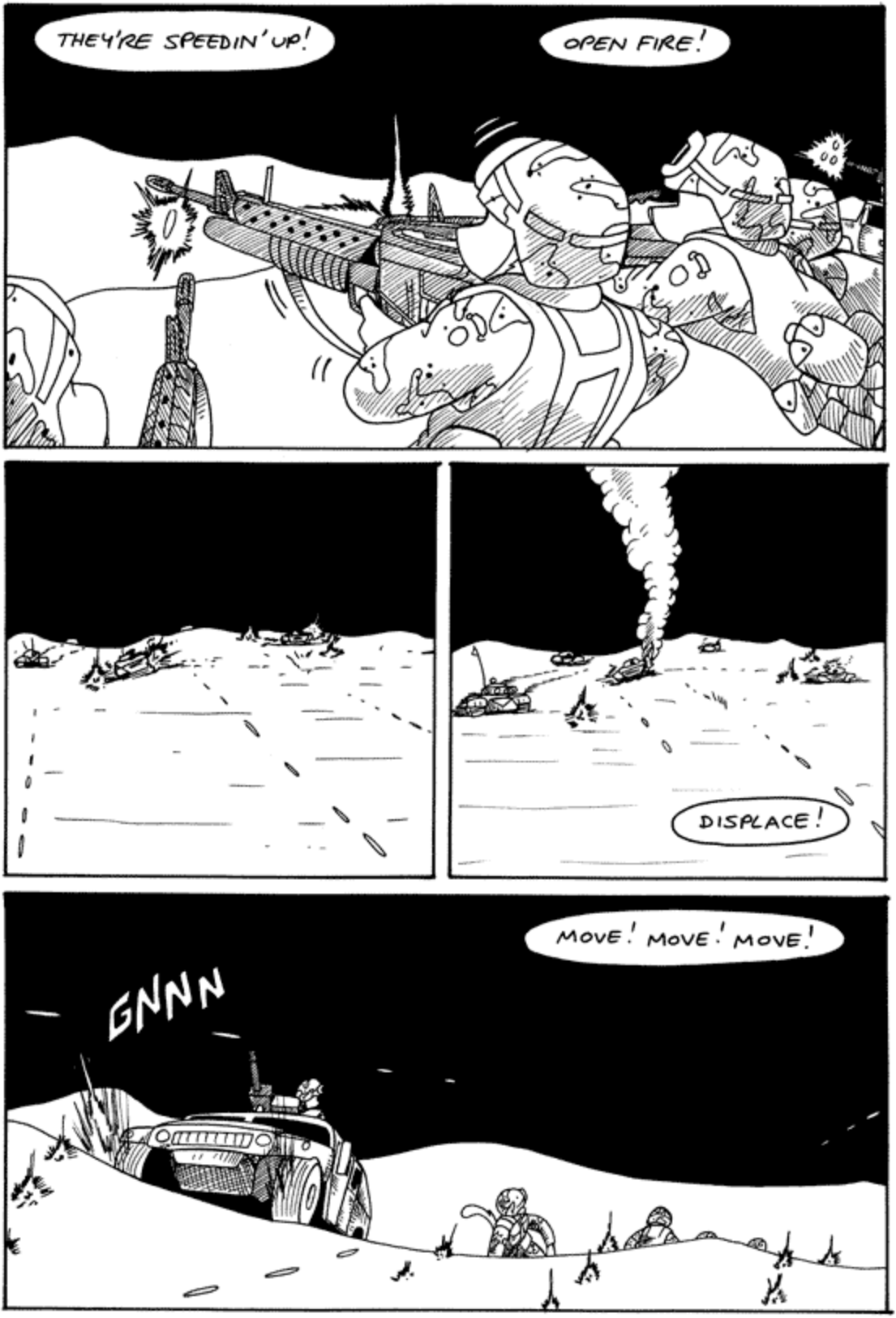

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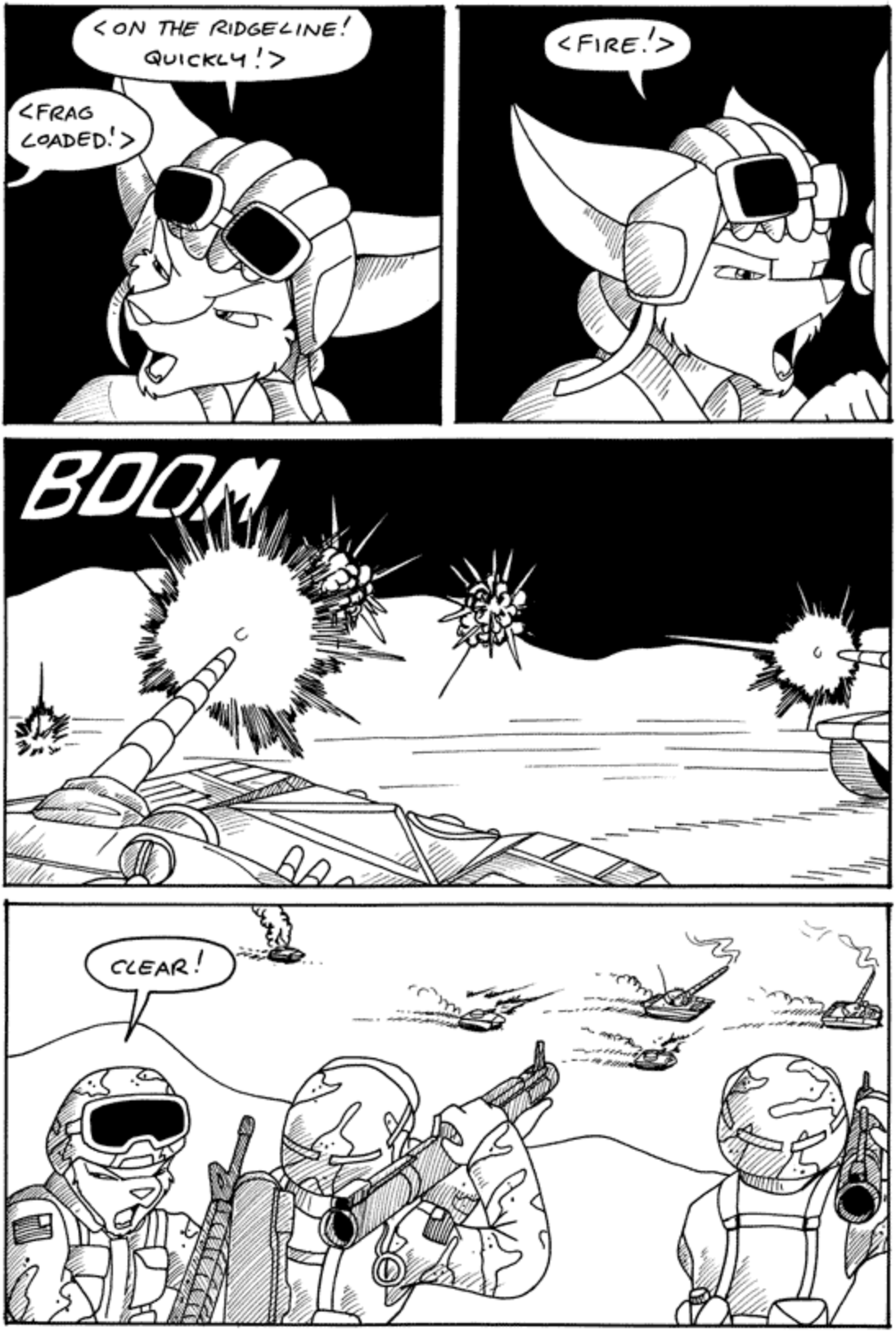

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YOUR MOTHER TELLS ME YOU'RE CONFIDENT HE'LL BE FINE.
THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING OVER THERE, NOW?
OH YEAH.
HE'LL BE FINE.
GNN
BOOM!
CRASH
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GET OUT OF THERE! GET TO THE CRASH SITE!
AAGH!!
FUCK!!
I GOT YA CARLOS. CAN YOU MOVE?
I CAN'T MOVE MY LEGS!
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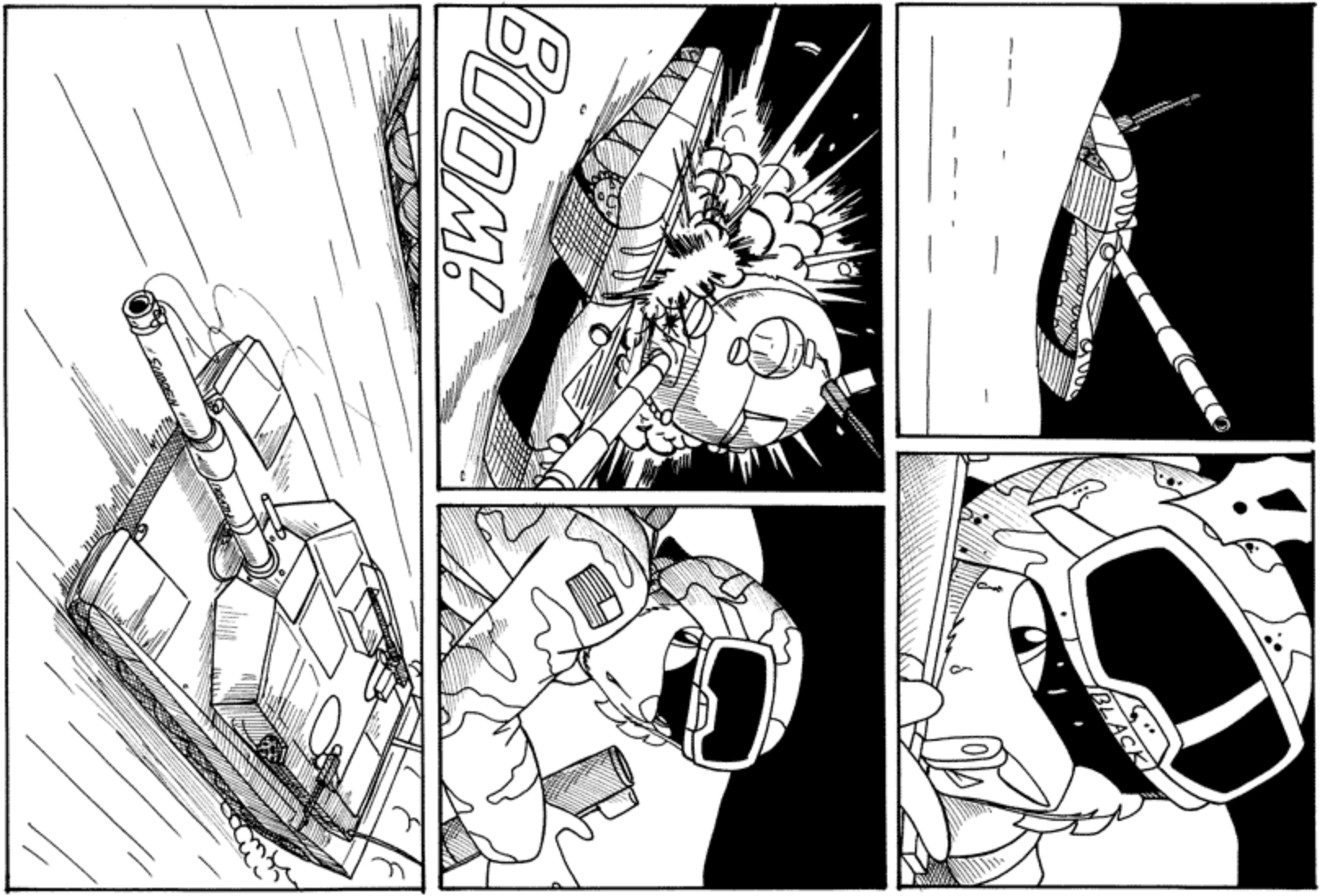

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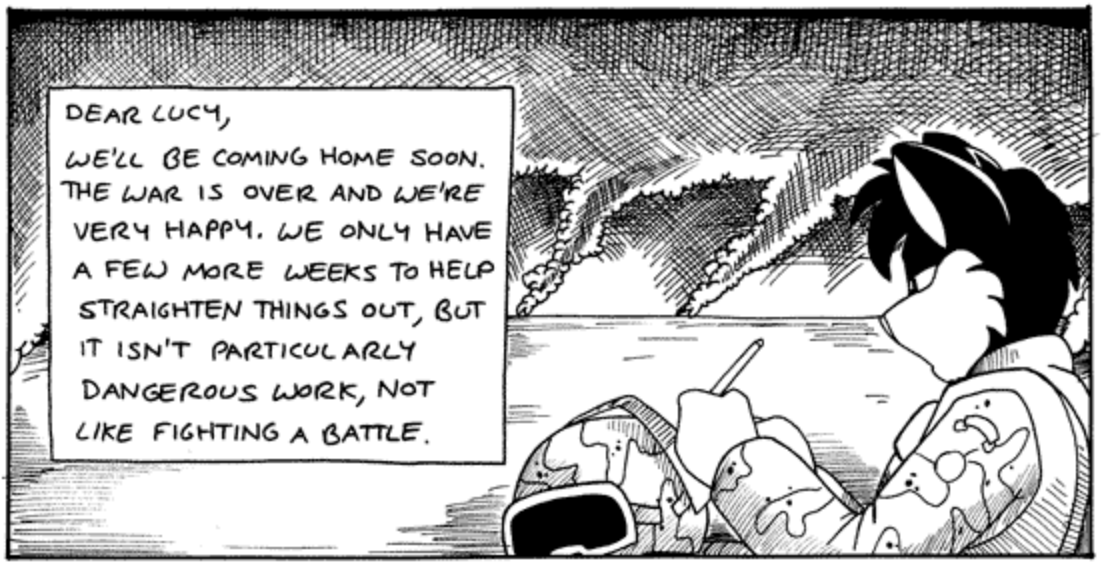

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HEY, I BROUGHT YOU SOME FRESH READING MATERIAL.
DUDE, THANKS.
WHAT DO THE DOCS SAY...?
THE ROUND HIT MY SPINE. I'LL BE GETTING AROUND IN A WHEELCHAIR WHEN I FINALLY GET OUT OF HERE.
SHIT...
DON'T FEEL BAD FOR ME, MAN.
I'M STILL ALIVE.
HEY YOU LIVE IN SMYRNA. I'M PRETTY CLOSE. I'LL VISIT WHEN YOU GET OUT.
SO LONG AS YOU CAN KEEP ME ROLLING IN BOOKS AND NINTENDO GAMES.
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WHISTLE!
OVER HERE, FISK!
UNLESS YOU WANT TO WALK ALL THE WAY HOME FROM HERE!
COME HERE.
WE MISSED YOU.
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EVERYONE'S WAITING FOR YOU AT HOME. JUST ABOUT EVERYONE WAS INVITED.
I HOPE YOU'RE HUNGRY. WE'VE GOT ABOUT EVERY KIND OF GRILLSTUFFS YOU CAN THINK OF!
SAM AND MOM ARE THERE, OF COURSE. THEY'RE HOPING TO GET MARRIED NOW THAT YOU'RE HOME FOR A WHILE.
MY BOYFRIEND TOMMY IS THERE, AND SO IS JESSICA, ROBERT, ELIZABETH AND HER NEW GUY, AMY... AND OH YEAH, BETH.
AND I KNOW... ...UM...
Z
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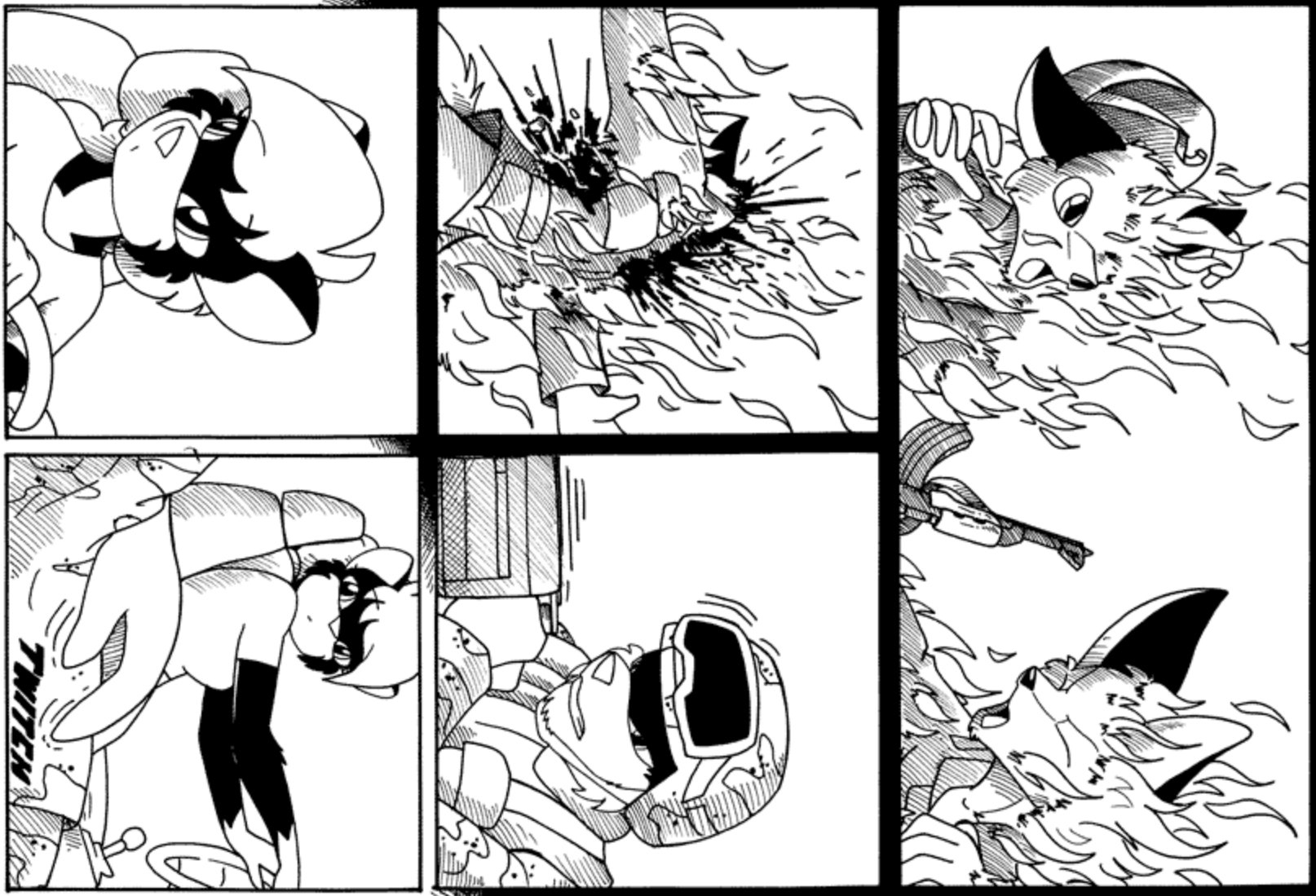

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I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, SON.
I'M JUST GLAD TO BE HOME.
WELCOME HOME.
THANK YOU.
HEY!
HEY!
MMM!
YEEEK!
GOODNESS. HOW LONG IS THAT HUG GONNA LAST?
WHAT? WHAT WAS THAT?...
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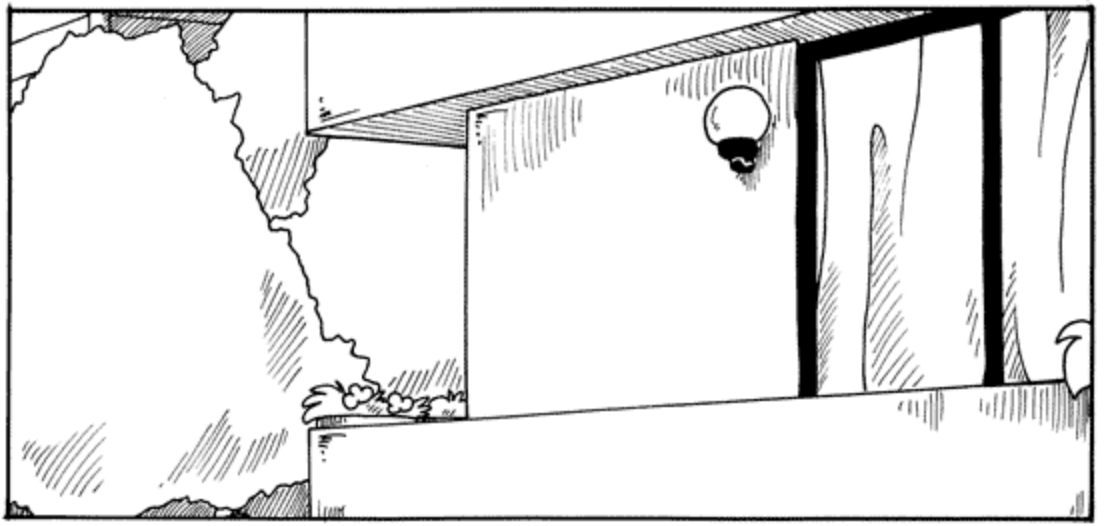

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YO! CARLOS!
HEY! COME IN AND HAVE A SEAT!
I BROUGHT YOU SOME NEW MAGAZINES, A VIDEO GAME, AND A COUPLE OF BOOKS YOU MIGHT LIKE.
OH MAN. THANKS, DUDE.
SO, HOW ARE THINGS WITH THE V.A.?
DON'T GET ME STARTED... I CAN'T GET ANSWERS FROM ANYONE THERE.
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ANSWERS? ABOUT YOUR BACK?
NOT JUST MY BACK. I'VE BEEN SLEEPING TOO MUCH, LATELY.
WELL, THAT DOESN'T SOUND BAD...
I'VE NEVER SLEPT FOR TWELVE HOURS BEFORE. WHEN I WOKE UP, MY MUSCLES WERE LIKE LEAD. IT TOOK ME THREE HOURS TO GET UP.
I ALMOST MISSED MY APPOINTMENT.
THEY DON'T KNOW WHY?
THEY DON'T KNOW SHIT.
YOU PRETTY MUCH CAUGHT ME ON ONE OF MY GOOD DAYS.
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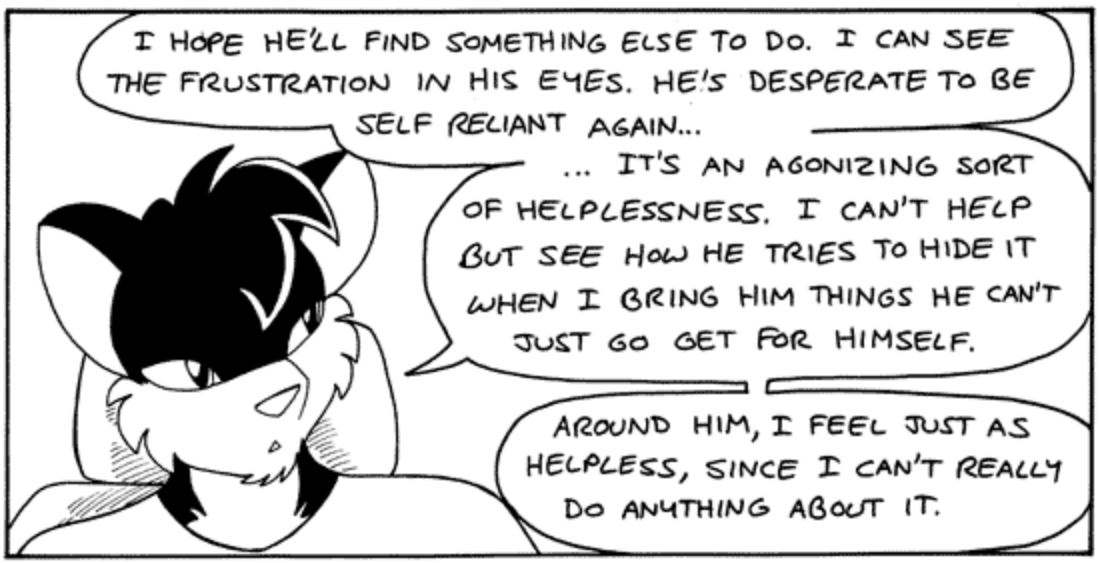

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HEY, IT'S COUSIN PERSIA.
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE WE'VE SEEN HER?
MM?
HI, GUYS!
HI, PERSIA! COME ON OVER!
KLAK
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A Better Days tribute to the original "Phil Hendrie Show". R.I.P. 2007 Jay Naylor www.jaynaylor.com

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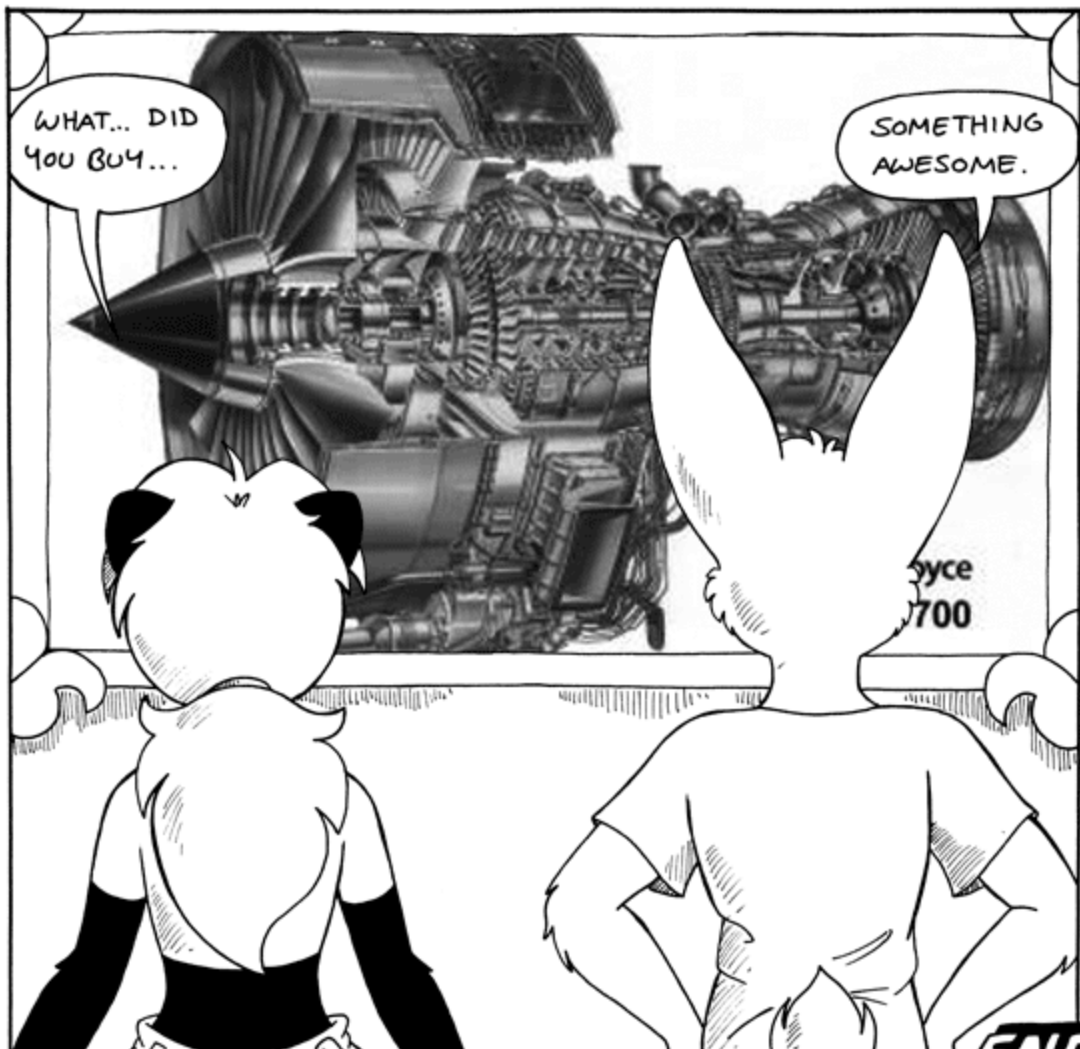

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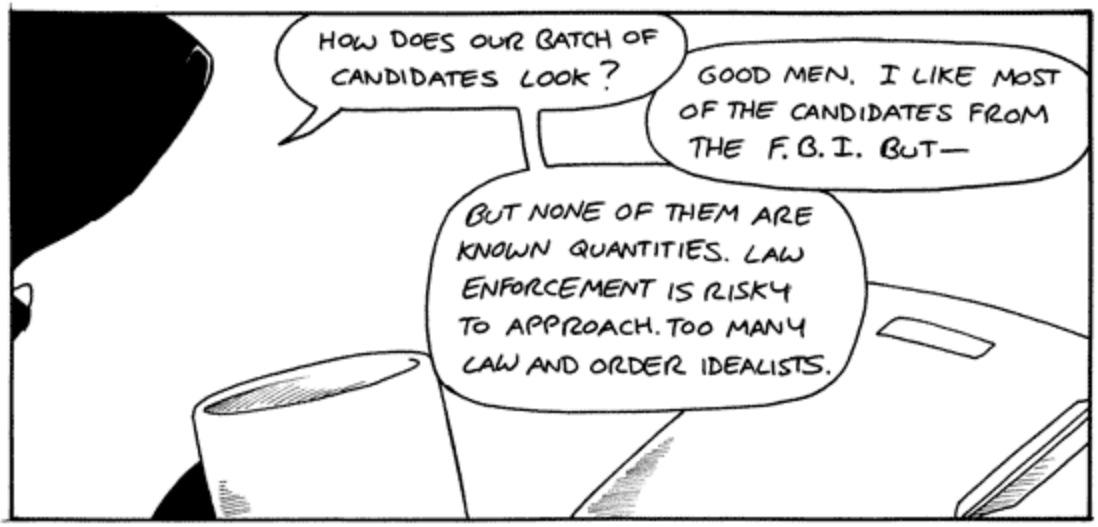

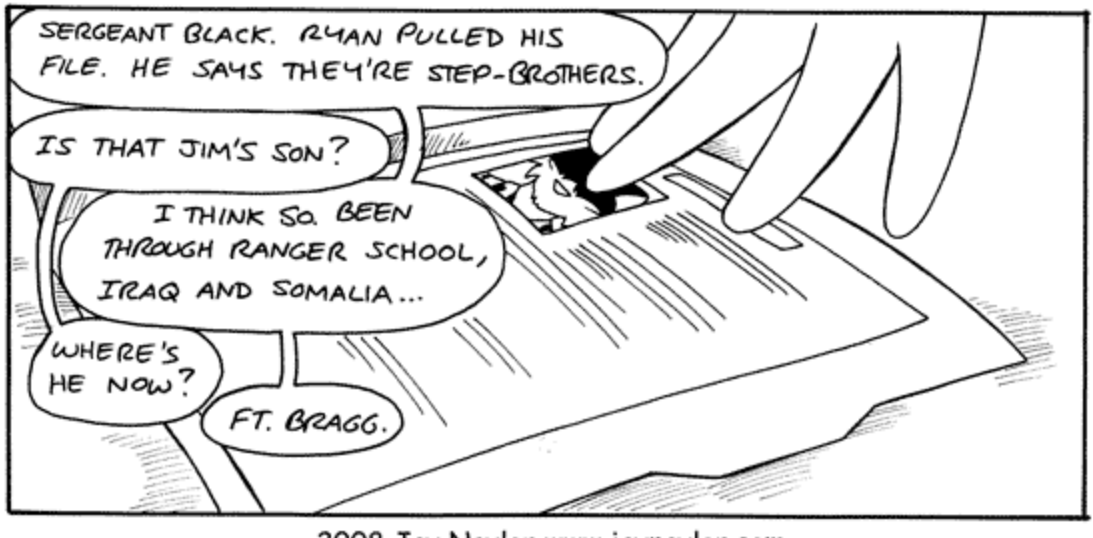

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OH, YOU GOT A LETTER FROM FISK. I PUT IT ON THE HALLWAY TABLE.
OH? I WONDER WHY HE'D WRITE.
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S FROM OVERSEAS.
HUH. IT'S FROM ISRAEL.
CAT GETS AROUND!
MUST BE NICE TO HAVE A SIBLING WHO'S ALSO A FRIEND. I COULD CARE LESS ABOUT MINE.
WELL, YOU DON'T HAVE A TWIN!
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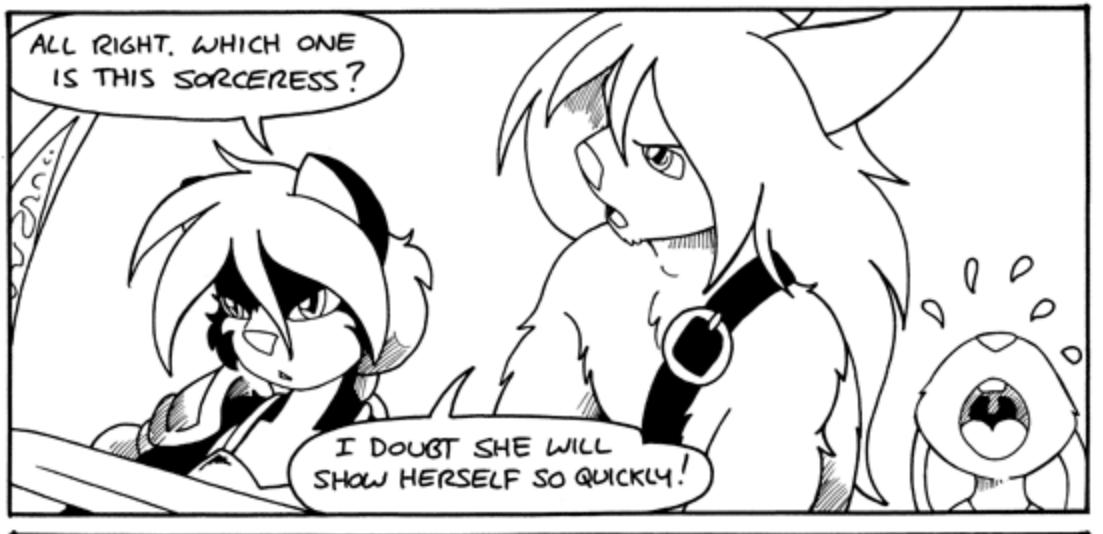

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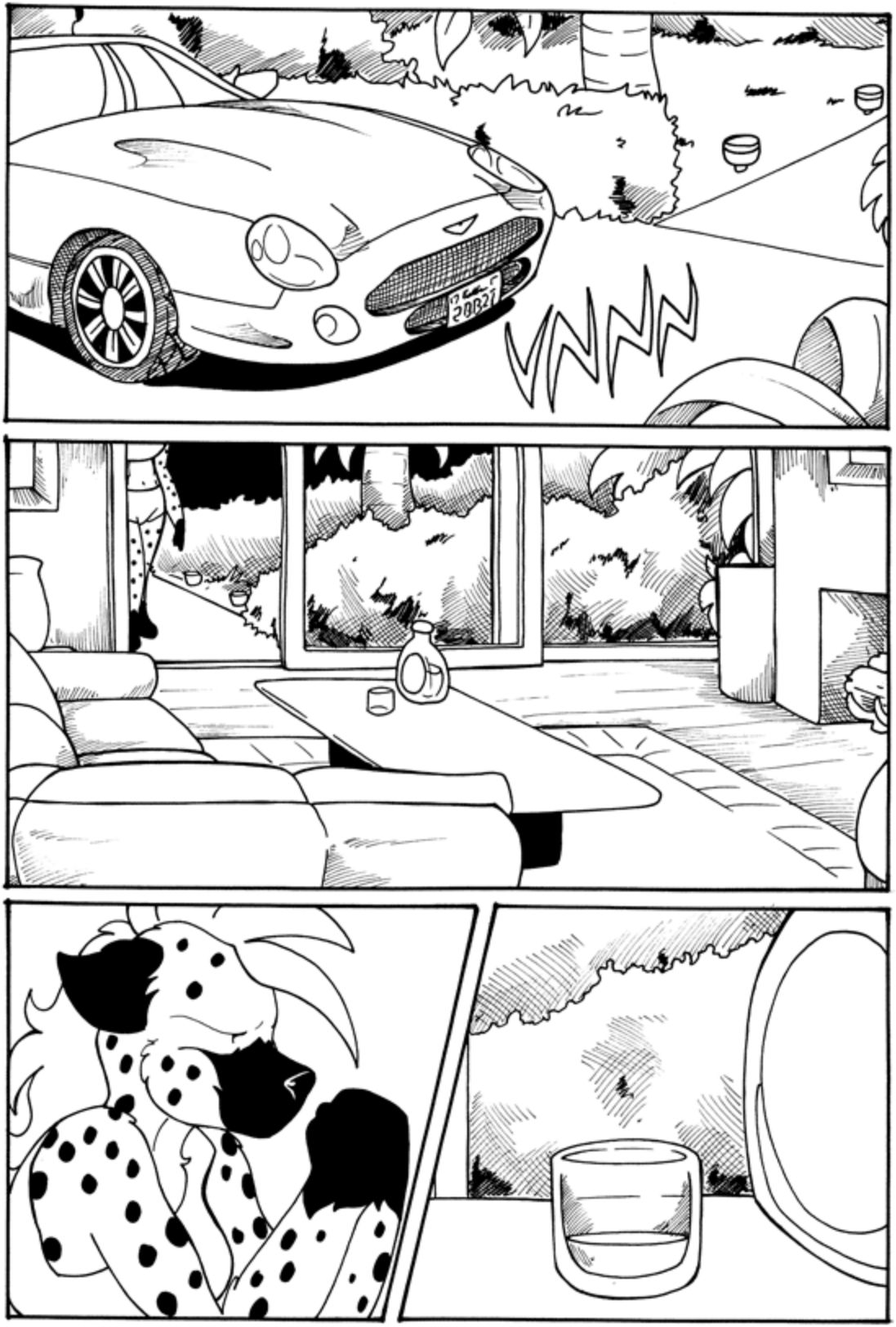

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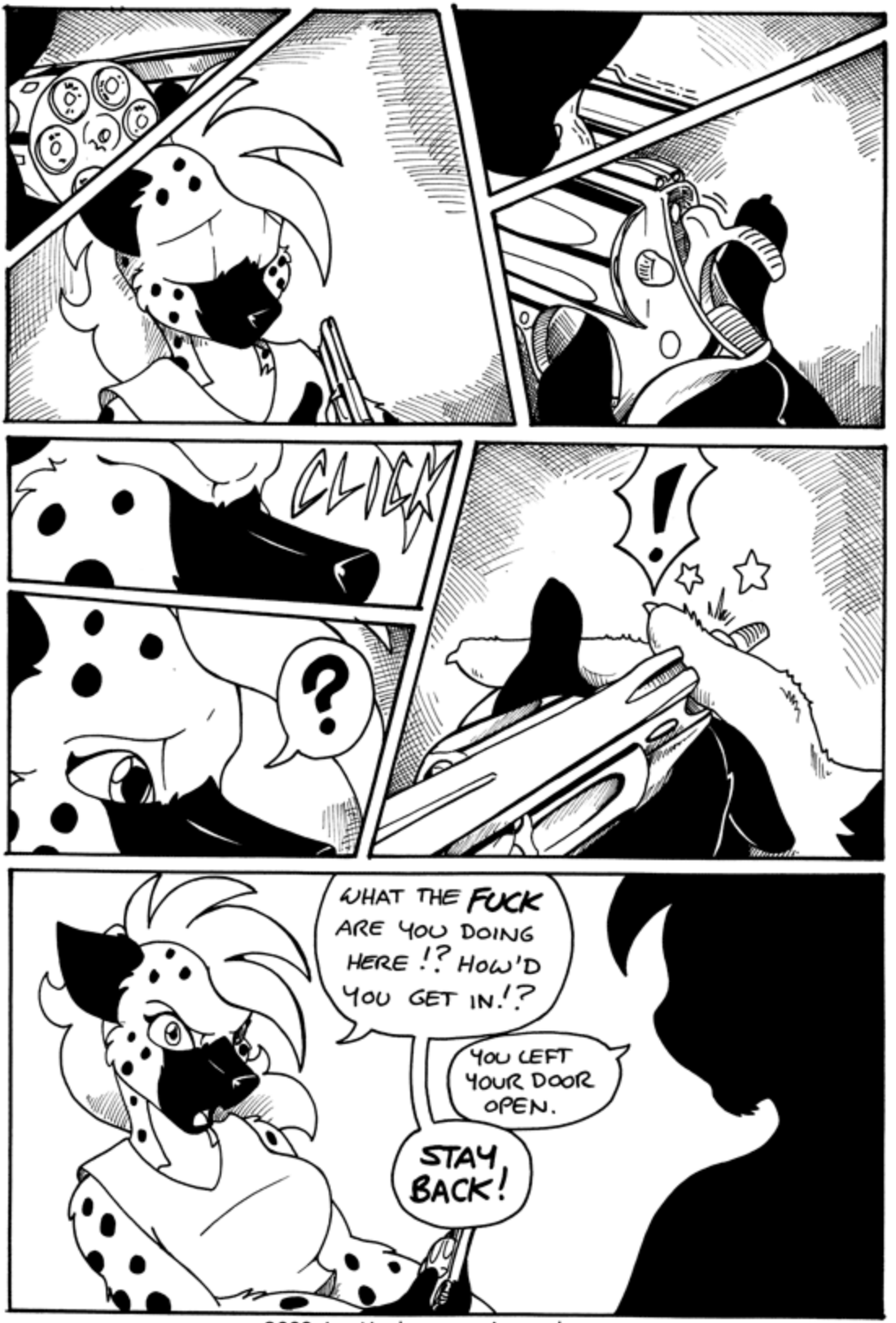

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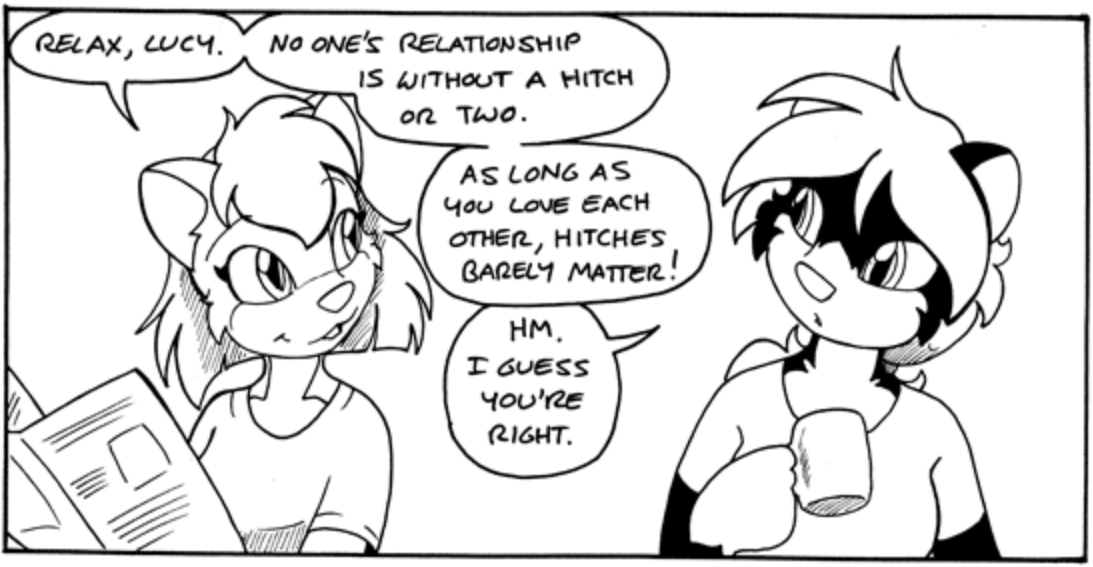

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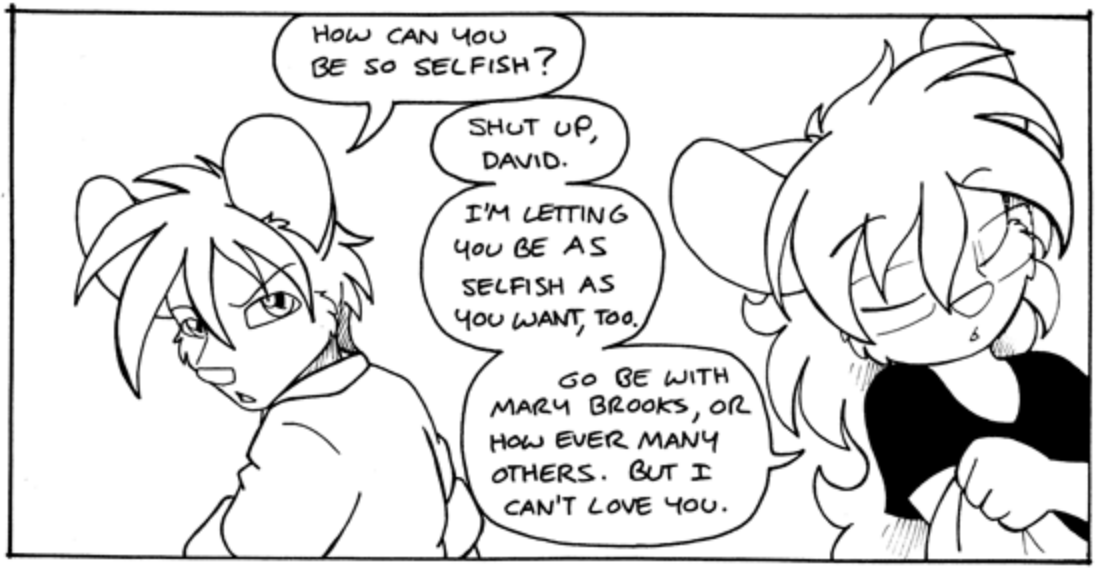

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